Another life

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Another life

by epizit

Summary

"I'll see you in another life" he whispered, closing his eyes, his words getting lost in the east wind.
Will woke up abruptly, breathing heavily, sheets and nightclothes damp from his sweat.
(Crossover/AU)

Notes

Hello everyone!! Being today the long awaited day of Hannibal's Season Finale (omgomgomgomgomg) I decided to get to work on something a little different than the usual hannigram fic :) so here it is, a crossover of Hannibal and King Arthur (if you haven't watched the movie yet make sure to check it out!!!!), since our lovely Mads Mikkelsen and Hugh Dancy star in them both :)

This chapter is rather introductive (Hannibal doesn't appear yet, he's off cooking someone I guess), so don't be discouraged as there's totally going to be some Hannigram later on ;)

Note: I highly recommend the Director's Cut version of the movie, it's longer and more enjoyable than the basic one :)

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.

As usual, reviews and critics are much much much appreciated :)

Enjoy :D

Chapter 1

He touched with the tips of his fingers the helm hanging over the grave, caressing it lightly, saying his last goodbye.

"I'll see you in another life" he whispered, closing his eyes, his words getting lost in the east wind.

Will woke up abruptly, breathing heavily, sheets and nightclothes damp from his sweat. This was a dream like none he had ever had. No stags, no dead bodies, nothing of such. All he could remember was this enormous crowd, him being a part of it, all standing around a burning pyre and a few burial mounds, the flames dancing in the wind. Everyone in the crowd wasn't muttering a word, keeping a reverential silence, all watching the three figures standing in the circle they had formed, close to the edge of the cliff. Everyone's eyes were concentrated on them, everyone's but his, who couldn't help but stare at the grave with the helm hanging over it, feeling the loss of the friend buried there, grieving it.

He sat up, drying the sweat on his forehead with the back of his hand, the feeling from the dream still lingering under his skin. The led of the alarm clock claimed it was still 4.27am, too early to get up, but even if he felt exhausted he knew he wouldn't be able to fall asleep again.

Will let himself fall again on the mattress, his face buried in his hands, lost in his thoughts. Immediately he pulled the hands back, frowning as he noticed that they were wet. He fingered his cheek again, seeing a drop shining on his fingertips. He hadn't realized he had cried during the dream. That was a first.

He rolled on the side and closed his eyes again, trying to get rid of the dull pain he felt inside.

The next few days his empathic abilities were requested on the field, not leaving him much time to think about the dream at all, let alone having any other, since he didn't manage to get much sleep. In the end the memory of it just slipped away: it was just a dream, a rather strange one to be honest, but nothing worth sweating.

It was late afternoon and, as his lecture ended, Will dismissed the class and started gathering his things, carefully avoiding everyone's eyes even though a few trainees would have loved to spare a few words with this enigmatic, shabby but strangely attractive teacher.

Giving his back to the entrance, he continued rummaging with his stuff, trying to pay attention to every sound, waiting for the silence to come, sign that he was finally alone. When he could finally hear his breaths echoing in the empty lecture hall, he let out an exhausted sigh. He had been feeling tired for days, almost like his mind tended to go somewhere else and he had a hard time keeping it in place, in the present, where he needed it to be, where it was requested to be.

"A-hem." Will turned around at the sound of someone clearing his throat, and saw Alana standing in the entrance, arms crossed, a gentle smile softening her features.

"Hey, Alana" he said, returning to his stuff, suddenly feeling like leaving. Their relationship had been strange lately, after that kiss, with her constantly giving off mixed signals, longing for his company and pushing him away at the same time. On his side, he couldn't blame her for not wanting anything more despite their mutual attraction, with him being so unstable. Will couldn't even manage to get his own life straight, how was he supposed to be in a relationship? That said, he found it easier to just avoid her, finding the situation stressful and very confusing. Still, Alana tried to be as friendly as she could, trying to be of some support to him.

"I overheard some of your female students talking. You seem to be a real lady-killer" she said, walking up to him. He chuckled, finding the mechanisms of social interaction rather amusing: his elusive behavior, born from his discomfort to people's closeness, was somehow perceived as mysterious and fascinating. He didn't mean to be attractive in any way, he acted like that with the genuine purpose of avoiding unnecessary conversations and unrequested proximity.

"Well, if they got to know me they wouldn't find me that interesting" Will said, simply stating what he thought to be the truth.

"I bet on the opposite: if you'd let other people get close, they wouldn't leave you alone anymore." Alana smiled, trying to cheer him on, but only getting a tiny smirk from him, who still didn't look at her.

After a brief silence, as he was done collecting all his belongings, Will couldn't avoid her gaze anymore, so he just faced her, leaning on the edge of his desk. She kept her glance fixed on his face, making him feel a bit uneasy, his frowned expression never leaving his features.

"How have you been lately?" she asked, her concern transpiring in her voice. He sighed, not really wanting to answer that question, knowing that whatever he said would only make her worry more. Taking a moment, he tried to find something to tell her that wouldn't make him sound like some mentally ill, then the thought occurred him.

"I've had a strange dream a few nights ago. No blood, no corpses, no nightmares whatsoever. It was just a normal dream…even if a strange one."

"I guess it's a good change, for once. Don't you think?" Alana looked at him, sounding encouraging, trying to get a smile from him. Will just nodded, looking at his feet, pondering if it would have been better to talk this matter with Doctor Lecter instead of her, given her tendency to act deliberately cautious with him, being overprotective and not really objective.

"Is this your happy face?" she asked after a while, poking him with a playful smile.

Is this your happy face?

What was that? Will stared hard at her, eyes wide, startled, not knowing where that voice had come from. It was like those words had pulled a string inside of him, triggering some

memory long buried in his subconscious, something familiar but not within his grasp.

Alana noticed that her words, instead of cracking a smile, made his frown deepen, his expression alarmed.

"What is it?" she asked, her lips contracted out of worry. The question seemed to snap Will out of it, who shook his head a little, eyeing all around him, like he needed to realize where they were.

"Will?" she called him again, cupping both his cheeks with her hands, trying to get him to focus his gaze on her, for he had seemed lost for a moment. He finally looked at her, his expression nervous both for the touch and the thoughts that occupied his mind.

"I'm fine" he said, looking tired, rubbing his eyes after having taken his glasses off. Alana let him go after a few seconds, still eyeing him warily.

"You should go home, Will. You look exhausted."

"I didn't get much sleep lately, with the last case and stuff" he answered, putting his glasses back on, now rubbing his forehead.

"You know you can count on me, if you ever feel like having company" she said, her gaze never leaving his face. Will knew she didn't mean it in a romantic way, but since he felt attracted to her, he knew he wouldn't call her anyway. He'd rather call someone who wouldn't treat him like a yoyo, pulling him closer and pushing him away like she did.

Not wanting to make her feel bad though, Will smiled weakly, acting like taking up her offer. "I know" he answered.

She raised her hand to caress him again, making him feel even more eager to leave, for the situation between them was confused enough the way it was, even without the physical contact she always seemed to look for. As soon as her hand reached his cheek, he pulled away, trying not to look like he was avoiding her touch, although doing exactly so.

"Bye, Alana" he muttered as he grabbed his case and moved past her, heading to the exit, leaving her in the empty lecture hall. He felt a little bad acting like that, but he couldn't help it. The way she acted towards him didn't actually help him feel more stable, given that it was the reason why she didn't want to deepen their relationship: her behavior was actually being counterproductive, and bad for him.

Had she realized that? Will didn't think so, otherwise she wouldn't keep on acting that way. If she had, it would all be kind of sadistic of her, and he didn't think her capable of such. Pacing across the parking lot lost in his thoughts, Will reached his car, got in and started the engine. He drove absent-mindedly all the way to his house, reviving their meeting in his head, wondering.

As he got home, his head was aching. Thinking too much about a solution-less matter wasn't going to take him anywhere near solving it, so he better let it go, at least for now. His dogs

greeted him as usual as he entered, and he patted them all before laying on his bed still fully clothed, eyes closed, his hands tiredly rubbing his face.

Is this your happy face?

The words echoed in his ears as he drifted to sleep.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone! Hannibal, as we all know, is now on he-ate-us (I LOVE cannibal puns XD) so I tried to ease the pain by continuing this ff :) hope u like it!
As always, reviews and critics are much much appreciated!!

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.

Enjoy :D

"Is this your happy face?"

Will heard a low laugh, coming from the man riding next to him, their bodies following the horses' pace. He then glanced at the long-haired man who had spoken and felt a grin creeping up on his face, not being able to contain it, recognizing this was not the time to be frowning but to rejoice, their long-awaited freedom waiting for them just around the corner.

"Galahad, do you still not know the Romans? They won't scratch their arses without holding a ceremony" the man continued, his blond beard and long messy hair shining in the afternoon sun, the shadow of a mocking grin on his lips. Will recognized that name as his, Galahad, and understood that that joke was directed at him, to keep up the good mood. He knew the man, it felt like he knew him, a brotherly-like feeling lingering in the way they acted and spoke to each other.

"Why don't you kill him, and then discharge yourself after?" The rugged and hirsute man spoke to him, seriously considering his own suggestion. His voice seemed to resound inside his chunky body, coming out low and thunderous despite his poor height.

"I don't kill for pleasure," Will answered, then glanced at the man now riding on his left "unlike some."

"Well, you should try it someday." This man was lean, his black hair falling over his dark eyes in a few messy locks, two black marks on his cheekbone, his voice silky. "You might get a taste for it." He looked at him in the eyes, locking them together in a long, intimate stare. Will found himself at loss of words, captured as he was.

"It's a part of you." The chunky man inadvertently interrupted their speechless exchange, making Will break their eye-contact, a little taken aback, and allowing the dark mysterious man to ride past them. "It's in your blood" he continued, trying to sound wise.

"No, no, no" Will answered quickly, cutting off the idea before even considering it, laughing briefly. He looked at his companions in the faces, before continuing. "No. As of tomorrow,

this was all just a bad memory." And he truly wished so.

"Ohh" his low voice rumbled as Will hurried his horse, making it fasten its pace to join the man with the dark eyes, who was now riding alone behind their leader.

As he caught up, Will slowed the horse down pulling slightly the reins, petting it on the neck before looking at him. This man reminded him of someone, his voice, his eyes weren't new to him, but he couldn't figure out who. He glanced back at Will, his expression not really revealing what was going on in his mind. Their white horses harmonized their paces as the riders kept looking at each other, not saying a word, while the chatters of the other knights continued in the background. Will finally broke the silence, looking around a little flustered before returning to him.

"Where will you go, Tristan, once it's all over?" he asked, finding it difficult to take his eyes off him.

"I'm not the kind to settle down and make a family" Tristan answered short after, his eyes looking up at the sky. "I am made for battle, it sings to my blood."

"Once you get tired of it, come visit me."

"I will die on the battlefield, of that I am certain."

Will stared hard at him, finding him difficult to decipher. He knew this man found pleasure in killing, his sword and skin getting stained by the enemies' blood, him being the only witness their last breath. He knew it well but couldn't understand it, for he had had enough battle and gore for a lifetime, and couldn't imagine wanting more.

As their horses kept pacing side by side, the two men stayed silent, only exchanging a few glances, their eyes drawing each other. There was something between them, Will could tell, something that kept creeping under his skin, making him feel uneasy in his company, but at the same time wanting to stay close to him. He wondered if the other felt the same, but by his glances there was no mistaking it.

It was strange for Will to feel drawn to a man he barely knew, even if it felt like he had known him forever, like they had shared much more than he could remember. Pondering all this, not knowing what else to say, he hurried his horse, surpassing him. Glancing over his shoulder, Will saw him whistle and stretch his arm out, waiting for his hawk to land. He then heard him talk to it in a low and tender voice, before turning to see how far the gate was. The clatter of the hooves on the dry land was accompanying them as they drove along the wall, it kept buzzing repeatedly in his ears, its noise growing louder and louder…

Will opened his eyes a little, not seeing anything in the dark, disturbed by the constant buzzing in his jacket. Rubbing his eyes, he took the phone out of its pocket and answered.

"Hello?" he said with a rusty voice, finding it hard to concentrate.

"Will? Where are you?"

"Who is this?" The voice on the phone sounded familiar.

"It's Doctor Lecter, Will. We had an appointment."

He sat up, now completely awake, eyeing his alarm clock for the time.

"Doctor Lecter, I am so sorry. I got home after my lecture but fell asleep almost instantly." Will's honest discomfort transpired in his voice, as he was genuinely sorry for having Hannibal waste time in his full-filled agenda.

"Don't mention it, Will. I called simply to make sure you were fine. I heard Jack had been keeping you quite busy lately."

"Yes, yes, he had. But that's no excuse-" he started, trying to apologize again.

"I said not to mention it. But since we haven't seen each other for over a week, I was wondering if you'd like to join me for dinner" Hannibal offered. Will took a moment to collect his thoughts before answering.

"Yeah, sure. If you don't mind having me."

"Certainly I don't. Is nine o'clock a good time for you?" he asked, polite as ever.

"It's perfect, thank you. I'll see you later then."

He threw his phone on the bed as soon as Hannibal hung up after greeting him, and buried his face in his hands, elbows shored on his knees. Was he completely losing it? He could remember some of the men from this dream in his other dream too, the one that had him crying in his sleep. What were those dreams? He had no control over them, there he did things he wasn't even capable of (he had never driven a horse in his life), and spoke of battles and swords and freedom like he knew exactly what it was all about.

Will stood up abruptly, as he figured out whose voice he had heard in his lecture hall in Alana's company: it was the blond-haired man's, the one who addressed him like a brother, like they had known each other for a very long time and were very close. He also knew his name, he had it on the tip of his tongue but couldn't manage to say it out loud. Why couldn't he remember the name of a man he had dreamt? Wasn't he a product of his own subconscious? Will had seen him in the other dream too, the one with the crowd on the hill, with the burning pyre and burial mounds. The chunky one too, he was there with them. However, it was his first time seeing the mysterious dark-haired man. Tristan was his name, he knew it, couldn't say *why* he knew, he just did.

Will let himself fall again on the mattress, his image still fresh in his mind. He frowned, remembering the attraction he had felt towards him in the dream, the feeling lingering under his skin. His features remembered him of someone he knew, they were familiar and at the same time foreign, the sound of his silky voice still ringing in his ears.

He stood up again, trying to shake it all off him, and switched the lights on. He had to take a shower and get dressed: the analysis of those dreams would have to wait. Will rushed, not giving himself the time to think about anything: he had enough on his mind with his real life problems, he didn't need other strange dreams to be added to the list of the weird things in his life.

As soon as he was done, Will fed the dogs and petted them all before reaching for his car-keys and heading out. A full-hour long drive awaited him, enough time to get sick with his own thoughts.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone :D 4th day of the he-ate-us, and I can't help letting my mind roam!!! soooooo here's the result :) hope you like it! (I have something on my mind, just wait and see!)
thanks everyone for reviews, kudos and bookmarks so far!! :)

As usual, reviews and critics are much much much appreciated!

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla

Enjoy :D

Time passed quickly as he stared out of the windshield, streetlamps lighting up his skin as his car passed by, his mind wandering aimlessly somewhere else. The route was so familiar to him, for he had done it so many times before, that he didn't need to focus on his driving to get to Hannibal's place safely.

Sooner than he thought, he found himself in the neighborhood. Will parked in the first free spot he found, got off and walked up to the door. Before knocking, he tried uselessly to tame his messy hair, only to make it worse. With a light snort he gave up, taking his glasses away and putting them in his pocket. He then turned to the door, only to get startled: he was now looking at a rather amused Hannibal in the eyes, who had opened the door soundlessly while he was trying to tidy himself up. By his expression, Will could tell he had witnessed his vain attempts to fix his appearance, and blushed out of embarrassment, avoiding his stare.

"Glad to see you, Will. Please, come in" Hannibal said, the shadow of a smile never leaving his lips as he made way for him to enter, keeping the door open. He cleared his throat, brushing past him, and took off his coat.

"Please." He took the coat from Will's hands, motioning for him towards the dining room, rewarded with a flash of his smile. As he hung it in the foyer, Hannibal joined him.

"You look very elegant tonight."

Will laughed under his breath. This kind of appreciation, coming from a man constantly dressed in the most classy three-piece suits he had ever seen, sounded ridiculous. But given his usual attire he guessed he actually looked elegant, at least compared to his standards: he was wearing a dark green sweater under a black jacket, combined with a pair of dark jeans.

"I was out of lumberjack shirts" he joked, getting a hardly contained chuckle from Hannibal. He smiled too.

"I mean it. That color brings out your eyes." Will eyed him, a bit taken aback, for that compliment seemed a little too intimate for their relationship not to be a mockery. Hannibal held his stare as long as he kept it fixed on him, his expression genuine, no sign of derision in his eyes.

"Well, thank you" he muttered, looking away and clearing his throat in embarrassment.

"Shall we?"

The dining table was beautifully set, with pale porcelain dishes making vivid contrast with the crimson tablecloth, fine silverware shining in the dim light of the candles, a full set of glasses gracefully placed. Will was astonished: Hannibal's fine taste showed up even in the little details.

"Hope you didn't go out of your way, preparing all this" said Will, looking at the beautifully looking dish that was placed in front of him right after he sat at the table.

"Not at all" he replied with a little smile before illustrating the dish's name, main ingredients and preparation, as he usually did when he had guests at his table. Will wondered if he did the same even when dining on his own, just for the pleasure of rewarding such refined recipes, not able to enjoy its taste without celebrating it first.

"Bon appétit" Hannibal said, waiting for Will to take the first bite before starting to eat himself. They enjoyed the dinner talking very little, savoring the taste of every course, such refined dishes it would have been a waste to spoil them with useless chatter. As they were done eating the dessert, Hannibal took the dirty plates to the kitchen, followed by Will who took both their goblets with him.

"So, how have you been lately?" he asked, refreshing the dishes under the running water of the faucet before setting them in the dishwasher.

"Fine, actually" Will answered, a bit surprised himself. "I haven't slept a lot lately, so no nightmares thankfully."

"You finally found some peace of mind."

"Not really" he murmured before taking a sip of his wine, sparkling Hannibal's interest, who glanced at him waiting for him to continue. He returned the glace and pondered brushing away the subject, but then sighed and had to give in.

"I've had a couple of dreams recently, connected to one another, but not like any other I've ever had."

"Tell me more about it."

"Usually in my dreams I am acting like somebody else, but am myself." Will stared at Hannibal in the eye, him knowing exactly what he was talking about, for he had talked abundantly about his dreams before. "But in these, I am stuck being someone else. I have no control on what I do, I'm like a first-person observer, but also the main actor. "

"Like you're impersonating someone else?"

"Yes, but even if I'm aware of it, my 'character' keeps on acting as he wants to. I can feel what he's thinking, or feeling…" He stopped talking, remembering the strange attraction he had felt towards the black-haired man named Tristan. He shook his head a little, deciding not to go there, not knowing how to explain it to Hannibal without making a laughing stock out of himself.

"The first of these dreams left me in tears as I woke up" Will confessed with a hushed voice, not looking at him. Hannibal stared, his expression indecipherable, wondering. He tapped his fingers on the glass of wine he was holding, and took a few steps around the counter isle, moving towards Will.

"What was it about?" Hannibal spoke softly, his eyes never leaving Will's face, almost trying to read his thoughts through his expressions.

"I was on a hill, with an enormous crowd, me being a part of it, and a couple of the men there I knew, and were also in the second dream, and we formed a big circle all around three people, everyone was looking at them but not me, no, I was looking at a burial mound, the one with the helm hanging on it, not the other one, not the burning pyre, the one with the helm. And as I stood there I couldn't help but feel pain, and sorrow, and grief for the loss of the person buried there, a person I don't even know, a person that probably doesn't even exist, 'cos it's all a fucking dream, and I can't get rid of this feeling, it's carved under my skin, still now I can't even-" He stopped abruptly his conceited speech as he felt his voice crack, eyes moistened, and put the glass on the counter, the back of his hand pressed against his quivering lips. Hannibal did the same and put a hand on his back, caressing him, trying to soothe whatever he was feeling, never taking his eyes off him.

Will breathed heavily onto his hand for a few moments, calming down, and rubbed away a tear that threatened to escape from the corner of his eye. He leaned on the fridge with his back, breathing deep as he closed his eyes, still avoiding his gaze.

"Sorry about this" he whispered, "I don't know what's gotten into me lately."

"No need to apologize, Will. I'm here to hear you out, if you're troubled" Hannibal said with affection, his hand now resting on his shoulder.

"What's happening to me?" Will asked staring at him, worry in his eyes. "First those memory gaps, now these creepy dreams… What's wrong with me? Am I going completely mad?"

They stared into each other's eyes, not moving, very close. After a few moments, Will felt a strange feeling in his belly, like a void just formed into his stomach, sucking everything in. He held his breath, captured, a warm feeling spreading in his chest. As he blinked, another face overlapped Hannibal's, leaving Will breathless. For a second he saw Tristan, and his heart skipped a beat.

"Tell me about the other dream" Hannibal said after a moment, while the other was glaring all around the room, trying to make sense of what he had just seen.

"No. No, no, no, no. No, I need to go home now, I really need to get some sleep. I am sleep-deprived, and these, *these*, are the side effects!" Will almost yelled, nearly hysterical, now shaking badly, drawing back, gesticulating wildly.

"Will- Will, Will, Will, calm down now" he said, trying con contain him.

"*Why did I see his face instead of yours*?" he screamed, wide-eyed.

"Will, wait. Whose face did you see?" Hannibal frowned, not understanding who he was referring to.

"I need to leave, *now*." He stormed out of the kitchen, took his coat and slammed the door after him, almost running to the car.

Hannibal stood where Will had left him, his mind running on empty.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Hello there :D here's another chapter!! Sorry for the long wait, but exams have no pity for us poor writers :(
I kinda have to concentrate on my studies now so it might take a week or so until next update...but don't worry!! I'll never leave a story unfinished, mark my words :D

Then again, I hope you enjoy this chapter and keep on reading till the very end of this story :)
As usual, reviews and critics are much much much appreciated!

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla

Enjoy :D

Will slammed the door behind him as he escaped from Hannibal's house. What the hell had happened in there? Why had he seen Tristan's face? Dreams were now overcoming reality?

He ran to his car holding the coat under his arm, not even caring about the cold; he rustled in his pockets with quivering hands, both from the agitation and the freezing temperature, looking for the car keys. Almost crying from frustration he emptied their contents on the car's roof, scattering coins, his medicines, slips of papers everywhere. Finally finding them, Will grabbed everything and, as he got in, saw Hannibal just outside the door, coming after him. He quickly started the engine and stomped on the accelerator, tires shrieking against the frozen asphalt, wanting to get away as fast as possible.

As he was driving away he glanced at the review mirror and saw Hannibal standing in the middle of the street, becoming smaller as got farther. His hands were trembling badly while gripping hard on the wheel, knuckles white, still numb from the cold. The skin on his face was burning hot now, cheeks red, his teeth chattering. He hadn't realized the temperature had dropped so much during the evening, as he had been warm and comfortable in the house, in his company.

He was sorry to leave Hannibal that way, him standing in the middle of the street in the freezing cold, looking at him while he was driving away…it made him really felt bad. But he needed to be alone, he needed time to think, to try to figure out what was going on inside of his head, for it really was upsetting him now. He could handle the dreams, those strange dreams he had no idea where they'd come from, but seeing them in his reality, fragments of them overlapping things and people in his life was too much for him. He felt himself

crumbling, tripping and falling over the shattering ground, over the reality he tried to hold on with all his might.

A few pained sounds escaped his lips, making him sound like an panicked animal, hurt and trapped, with no way out of his own mind. Will slammed hard his hand against the wheel out of frustration, squeezing his eyes shut, taking out his rage for his own helplessness. Why was he so weak? He was always helping saving people, but why couldn't he manage to help his own self?

When he opened his eyes a second later, his breath stopped. A dark, enormous stag, now brightly illuminated by his car's lights, stood in the middle of the road, his head turned towards him, his shining black eyes staring at him. Will swerved abruptly, avoiding it by a hair's breadth, his heart slamming in his throat, the shrieking of his car's tires deafening him. Stomping now on the brake, trying to stop, the rear started spinning, the tires losing grip on the icy asphalt. Having no control, he kept gripping hard on the wheel as the world spun out of the windshield, stiff, squeezing his eyes shut and clenching his teeth as he prepared for the impact.

It all happened in the blink of an eye. The car stopped his mad spinning against a tree standing on the side of the road with a loud crash, the force of the impact hitting him violently, throwing him against the dashboard and the door and back to the seat like a broken doll, and in an instant it all was still.

Will blinked rapidly, breathing heavily through his mouth, the ring in his ears getting louder and louder. He turned his head slightly glancing out of the cracked windshield, his sight blurring, the last thing he saw being the stag's shape loomed in the moonlight before it all went dark.

Hannibal had been pacing back and forth in his house since Will had left, restless. What he had told him, those dreams, the feeling of being trapped in a character, he knew very well for he had experienced it himself many many years before, so long ago he had been taken off guard by the sudden mention of it all.

He tapped on the counter with his fingertips, trying to recall his own dreams, the memory of them stocked somewhere in his mind but not lost. He had been having similar dreams when he was younger, dreams of a time long gone, where he wasn't born yet, but vivid in his mind like he had lived through 'em. Kind of ironic that, out of everyone, Will was starting to get similar dreams. Of course he had known from the start how alike they were, that's why he had become interested in the man in the first place, but these dreams now had stirred in him a curiosity beyond any he had ever had towards anyone. Will Graham was a puzzle that he had yet to figure out, and this thing about the dreams was like a piece he hadn't noticed before, maybe the key of the whole solution.

He needed more details, but with Will's sanity shattering he needed to be careful. First thing, Hannibal had to show concern about his wellbeing, for he needed him to feel sorry and in need to owe him an explanation. With a little push, Will would eventually tell him

everything, helping him retrieve his own dreams and put all the elements together, in order to see the entire picture.

He reached for his phone, dialed Will's cellphone number and waited for him to pick up. Since he didn't, he called him a second, a third, a fourth time, but still no answer, no matter how long he waited. Hannibal frowned while the line got interrupted again, starting to worry. It was not like Will to avoid his calls.

He glanced at his watch. It had been only 30 minutes or so since Will had left in a hurry, he should still be on the way home, so why wasn't he picking up?

An unpleasant feeling started creeping up in Hannibal's belly as he put his phone on the counter, placing his palms against its smooth and cold surface. Will was very agitated when he had rushed out of his house and had not considered stopping even after seeing him chasing him. Had he been in the state of mind to drive home safely? He wasn't sure about that, that's the main reason why he had tried to stop him, along with his burning curiosity about those dreams. Now, with him not picking up his calls, Hannibal was starting to feel worried.

He paced back and forth for a few minutes, weighting his thoughts, then swiftly put on his coat, grabbed cellphone and keys, and got to his car.

A low ring kept drilling through his ears as he slowly came back to his senses. Opening his eyes lightly, Will looked around him trying to focus, taking a few moments to realize what had happened and where he was. He winced as he tried to move, a sharp pain piercing his head. Gritting his teeth, he sat up straight, touching his forehead and wincing again before looking at his hand, now wet with his own blood, shining black and bright in the white light of the moon.

How much time had passed? He had no idea. His head was pulsing, his whole body aching, his teeth chattering for the cold. He wrapped his arms around him, rubbing the hands against the fabric of the jacket, trying to ease the shivers that made him tremble. The ring kept on going in the background, and it took him a few moments to recognize it as his own ringtone. Slowly, he reached for the phone in his coat's pocket, took it out and answered.

"Hello?" he said with a voice he almost didn't sound as his own.

"Will? Why didn't you pick up my calls? I've been calling you for hours" Hannibal's voice sounded hurried and a little alarmed.

"I crashed, I- I think I passed out"

"Are you hurt? Where are you?"

"No, no, I'm fine, I just…Hannibal" His name sounded like a cry for help.

"Tell me where you are, Will. Did you take an alternative route or are you on the main road?"

"The usual one"

"I'm coming, Will. Don't move, stay where you are, I'm coming."

"Hannibal" Will didn't know why he kept on calling him, he couldn't help himself, his name just kept escaping from his mouth.

"I'm here, Will. Don't worry, I'll be there in a few minutes."

"Hannibal, I'm sorry" He didn't even know what he was apologizing for, his head was starting to spin again, he couldn't stay focused.

"Shh Will, it's okay, I'm almost there."

"Hannibal" he whispered with closed eyes as the phone slipped from his numb fingers, his head resting against the window, his breaths echoing in his ears.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone!! ...shhhhhh I know what I've said about my exams and not update the fic for a week and blablabla...but when you feel creative what do you have to do? write, that's it XD

I had to do a little research for this chapter, about the knight's religion: in the movie it's said a few times that they're pagans and follow their ancestors' faith, sooooo....for further explanation feel free to ask, just know that I haven't made up anything but tried to stay true to the hystorical facts :)

thank you for the reviews so far!! Even though I *almost* never answer, don't worry, I read and rejoice every of them :)
as always, reviews and critics are much much much appreciated!!

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla

Enjoy :D

"*Rus!*"

Bors' voice thundered in his ears as they all moved closer to their leader, the man in shining armor, the half-roman half-celtic knight Arthur. He was about to leave when he had been spotted by his companions, making him turn to face them, interrupting the long awaited party they were holding for their upcoming freedom. The grave expression on his face should have been a warning, but they all were too happy and too drunk to pay any attention to it, forcing him to put into words the weight he was carrying on his shoulders since his last talk with the Bishop, the same man who should have freed them already.

"Knights" he called them, his voice solemn. "Brothers in arms. Your courage has been tested beyond all limits…"

"Yes" Bors agreed, his big head nodding.

"…but I must ask you for one further trial."

"Drink" someone said, and they all chuckled, the mood light and bubbly.

"We must leave on a final mission for Rome before our freedom can be granted." Arthur looked at them all, some returning the gaze, others still laughing. "Above the wall, far in the north, there is a Roman family in need of rescue."

Will felt the laugher die in his throat. Arthur's words didn't sound like a joke anymore.

"They are trapped by Saxons" he continued, holding their stares. "Our orders are to rescue their safety."

"Let the Romans take care of their own."

"Above the wall is Woad territory" stated his blond friend near him, as if it was enough information to avoid further talk about the matter.

"Our duty to Rome, if it ever was a duty, is *done*." Will said spitting the last word, disgusted, feeling the rage mounting in his lungs, making him sick. "Our pact with Rome is done."

"Every knight here has laid his life on the line for you. For *you*" Bors repeated, pointing his stubby finger at their leader, his voice getting louder. "And instead of freedom, you want more blood? *Our* blood?"

Will looked away, not capable of looking at any of them any longer, he felt burning fury building up inside of him, making his upper lip quiver as he tried to contain it. How could *he* ask this of them? A trial more dangerous than any other they had ever encountered? This was supposed to be the day when they could finally take a hold of their precious long awaited freedom, and instead they were offered more blood, more gore and death. This was more than he could take, more than any of them could. He heard Bors' and Arthur's voices rumble in the background, but he was deaf to their words, for he had heard enough.

"*I am a free man*!" Bors' voice shouted, snapping Will out of his thoughts, as he was not talking only for himself, but talking for them all. "I will choose my own fate!" His eyes gleamed with tears, the tears of a man whose most dear belonging had been taken from his hands a second after he had finally succeeded in grabbing it, after years and years of suffered longing.

"Yeah, yeah." Will glanced briefly at Tristan, who was still eating the apple in his hands, his silky voice nonchalant ad he talked, like the matter didn't concern him. "We're all going to die someday. If it's a death from a Saxon that frightens you," he glanced at the others while talking, his eyes challenging them, "stay home."

"Listen, if you're so eager to die, you can die right now!" Will burst out shouting, not being able to contain his rage anymore, looking back at him, letting his anger spill with every word he said. Those words were an insult, it wasn't fear that made them react that way at this new quest, it was the feeling of betrayal they all felt for their once again denied freedom. It was their right, it was promised to them 15 years ago, and now that it was within their grasp it had been taken away, out of their reach.

"Enough, enough!" Lancelot tried to tame him, to contain his erupting anger, only to be shoved away.

"*I have something to live for*!" He screamed on top of his lungs looking at Arthur in the eyes, meaning every single word.

"The Romans have broken their word. We have the word of Arthur. That is good enough. I'll prepare." Dagonet was a man of few words, but the few ones he pronounced were filled with loyalty towards their leader. It was difficult to say if he was angry or disappointed, Will couldn't tell, for he never showed much of an emotion, even in a matter of high importance as this one.

"Bors. You coming?" he asked as he met him while moving away from the group.

"Of course I'm coming! Can't let you go on your own! You'll all get killed!" Bors shouted back at him, his words following Dagonet as he paced towards his lodgings followed by Tristan who, having spoken his mind, had lost interest in further discussion of the matter.

"I'm just saying what you're all thinking!" he added now in their direction, before stomping away from them, muttering under his breath.

Will was still standing there, barely looking at Lancelot or Arthur, stubbornly refusing to accept the reality, his eyes fixed angrily on the ground. Gawain moved closer, taking a sip of wine from his amphora.

"And you, Gawain?"

"I'm with you" he replied. Then, after glancing at his friend, added "Galahad as well", making Will turn to look at him abruptly, before going. He watched him take a few steps, heading out, then laughed bitterly at Arthur and at their own fate, emptying the amphora he was holding on the ground while looking at him in the eyes.

Not sure what would escape his mouth, Will kept it closed tight letting his feelings show through his gestures: he threw the jar on the ground, smashing it, feeling angry and crestfallen. He looked one last time at their leader, conveying all his bitterness and resentment in his stare, then turned and made his way past Galwain, not saying a word to him, not talking to anyone, heading to his lodgings.

As soon as he entered, he started gathering his things, the same he had unpacked a few hours earlier. In the dim light of the candles he tried to keep himself busy, trying to avoid any thought, feeling his rage still lingering deep inside, ready to burn again, to swallow him. It was all so unfair. They were free. *Free*. He didn't like that Roman, Bishop Germanius, hadn't liked him since they had met him after slaying all those Woads. He had looked so smug and arrogant, so proud of the slaughter he was stepping upon. A man like him wasn't to be trusted, that's what he had first thought of him, now he knew why.

Picking up a dagger Will stopped moving, breath lingering, looking at his own reflection on the water bowl next to his bed, seeing a very angry man returning his gaze, a man whose eyes were filled with anger and delusion. Looking away, his glace stopped on the dagger he was holding as he weighted it in his hands for a few moments, then threw it with rage on the wooden wall, screaming, the blade sinking into it. Panting lightly, his face contracted in a deep frown, he stared hard at it, and winced when another one thrust on his dagger's back of the handle. Will then turned to see a dark haired man standing in the entrance, his brown eyes looking at him behind the messy strands of his black hair.

"Tristan" he called, surprised to see him in his room. He just stood there, leaning on the side, his eyes fixed on him, making Will wonder why was he there. Feeling a bit uneasy, he started roaming through his stuff again, avoiding eye-contact.

"Shouldn't you be preparing?" he asked, without looking at him.

"You're coming too, huh?"

Will's breath stopped. His silky voice came from way closer than he expected, but he dared not to turn and face him. Shaking the feeling off, he laughed bitterly, spite still lingering under his skin.

"I don't have a choice, have I?"

"Yet you seem very reluctant about it."

"Who would willingly accept a quest that implies almost certain death?"

"You know, death isn't the end of everything. Our soul survives, it rejoins the *fravashi*, and one day we'll live again."

Will scoffed under his breath. He knew well what their ancestor's religion stated, and what was in store for their souls: they had sinned in this life, therefore weren't allowed to find eternal peace returning to Ahura's bosom but had to reincarnate, in order to purify their immortal soul and wear off their past lives' sins. Even so, he didn't like the thought of ending this life before its time.

"Our souls will live again…not us" he whispered almost to himself.

"Isn't it the same?"

His voice gave him the chills, it felt like a caress on his skin. He had moved even closer now, he could feel his proximity, not knowing how, but he felt him near him. Will then turned to face him, not being able to avoid him anymore, and met his eyes only a few inches from his, holding his breath. He didn't expect him to be *this close*.

The right side of Tristan's face was partially lit by the warm light of the candles, illuminating his sharp features, lighting up his cheekbones, making his eyes shine with warmth.

Will couldn't look away, their eyes were locked together in an infinite exchange that didn't need words. They stood there like that for a long time, longer than he could imagine, because when Tristan finally moved the candles were almost worn out, their dim flames barely lit. His hand came up to his cheek, cupping it, caressing it with force, possessively, his eyes now looking insistently at his mouth. Will's lips parted under his stare, his pulse accelerated under his touch.

Tristan seemed to bare his teeth in a brief growl, before moving closer, the gap between their lips becoming thinner and thinner…

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Swiggity swag, where is the stag? ehhehehehe hello everyone :D here's another chapter!!! we're heading to conclusion, but there's still a lot of time before we get there ;) so, enjoy your stay!

As usual, thanks everyone for reading/liking/commenting this fic :3 further reviews and critics are much much much appreciated!!

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla

Enjoy :D

"Will! Will, can you hear me?"

Will slowly came back to his senses, blinded by a bright light pointed right in his eyes, one forcefully opened after the other. He raised a hand, covering them, annoyed.

"Will, answer me. Can you hear me?"

He slightly opened his eyes, blinking rapidly, trying to focus, to see anything in the dark that surrounded him, but it took him a few moment to regain his sight, obscured by all the dark dots that kept appearing wherever he looked.

"Will?" A warm caress, a light touch on his frozen skin, hand cupping his cheek. A familiar feeling.

"Tristan" Will whispered, looking at him, barely seeing his face in the dark.

"It's Hannibal, Will" he replied after a few seconds, his voice deadly still.

"Hannibal?" He felt so confused, had to blink a couple times before actually recognizing his psychiatrist's face. "Hannibal" he said, eyes fixed on him like he was seeing his face for the first time.

"Yes Will, I'm here. How are you feeling?"

"I don't know." His eyes had a hard time staying open, his head was fuzzy, his whole body aching.

"You probably had a concussion, but doesn't seem to be anything worse. Even so…"

"Ah!" Will winced, shrinking back on the seat, as he felt a sharp pain piercing his skull.

"You have a deep cut on your forehead, it needs a few stitches."

"Where am I?"

"You don't remember?"

"I'm… not sure."

"You crashed a few miles after leaving my house. You don't remember how it happened?"

Will looked as lost as he felt. His eyes kept wandering aimlessly, looking at the surroundings, trying to figure out something, anything. "No" he admitted in the end, defeated.

"Come, I'll take you back to my house. If your condition worsen, I'll take you to the hospital immediately." As soon as he opened his mouth to protest, Hannibal silenced him. "No arguing."

Will puffed, giving up. He let him help him out of the car, climbing his way out of the vehicle, not really stable on his feet. He found out soon enough that he was frozen to the core, not having his coat on, having laid for God knows how long in his wracked car, glass of the windows cracked open, chilly night's wind entering. His teeth were chattering, his whole body was shaking with tremors as Hannibal led him to his own car and settled him in the passenger seat, the heating blowing warm air on his stiffened limbs. Will sighed in relief, enjoying fully the warmth, his head still fuzzy. Soon after, Hannibal got in the car, carrying Will's coat, which he laid on him like a blanket.

"Hannibal, there's no need-" he groaned.

"*Shut up, Will*."

His commanding voice surprised him a little. Will eyed him, not uttering another word as he started the engine, not having ever heard him use such a tone when talking to him. The car got into motion, and a second later they were heading back to Baltimore.

Will wrapped himself in his coat, the shivers gradually fading, his hands not numb anymore, all while stealing side-glances at Hannibal, who had kept quiet himself after having silenced him. As time passed, he felt the mutism becoming quite oppressing. Hannibal seemed angry despite his blank expression, but he couldn't understand what he could be mad about, and dared not ask. The trip back seemed to him way longer than it actually was.

When they finally arrived, after parking the car, Hannibal quickly got off and came to his side, opening the door for him and helping him out. Will let him lead him in and couldn't bring himself to open his mouth, for he was actually taken aback by his psychiatrist's behavior, also a little intimidated. He had never seen him like this, so authoritarian and grave.

He followed Hannibal's lead like a child who's being brought to his room after having misbehaved, which was silly because he didn't do anything to feel guilty about, but even so he didn't dare to argue. Will was brought to the kitchen and settled on a stool, Hannibal

returned soon after, carrying his fist-aid kit. He prepared what he needed to patch him up, then stood in front of him.

"Stay still."

And so Will did. He sat still while Hannibal cleaned his face from the blood and disinfected the wound, even if it burned like hell when he did, clenching his fists and keeping his gaze fixed on him. He felt his fingers touching him with care, leaving warm traces on his skin as ke took care of him, gentle with every gesture. But his emotionless expression had something he had never seen in him, like a note in a tune that doesn't sound right but you can't really spot in the score.

When he was done, he cleaned up everything and started packing the kit back.

"Thanks." Will received no response. "Why are you mad?" he asked sheepishly, needing a few moments to find the courage to speak up.

"Why would I be?" he answered, not looking at him.

"I don't know. You look like you stepped on a thorn or something."

Hannibal eyed him with the same expression he had been carrying since his rescue, before returning to stuff things into the kit.

"I'm not mad."

"Then what's the matter? As far as I recall, I was the one who got into an accident. Yet you're acting like it was my fault" Will said, a bit resented.

"You left in a mental state that made it unsafe for you to drive, it made you reckless."

"Hey, it's not like I played Fast and Furious or anything, alright?"

Hannibal turned to look at him in the eyes, dead serious.

"You crashed into a tree. I called you a dozen times before you finally picked up, and then you pass out in the middle of the call. Do you have any idea how worried I was?" He did sound angry.

"I'm sorry about that. But I didn't run into the tree because I was speeding, I just-"

Will stopped talking midsentence, widening his eyes like he just got slapped. It had all come back to him in a second, the stag, the dream, everything, like a cold shower.

"The stag. There was a stag on the road, standing right there, looking at me! I had to swerve to avoid it, I couldn't help it, the car lost control…" He said, frantically looking around, then his gaze went back to Hannibal. "I had a *beard*" Will said with emphasis, eyes wide, sounding like he had just discovered the cure for cancer.

"…a beard" Hannibal repeated, looking at him.

"Yes!"

"Will, you *have* a beard." He sounded like he was talking to some psychiatric case.

"No, no, no, not this I-forgot-to-shave-this-morning beard, more like *a month old* beard."

"I am afraid you've lost me."

"My strange dreams, the ones where I'm trapped in my character, you remember them right? Well after the crash, when I passed out while on the phone with you, I had *another one*. I saw my reflection. It was me, with longer hair and beard, but it was definitely me. And I was mad, God, I was so mad, because me as well as the other knights were about to finally be freed from our duty, but then another mission was casted upon us, and our leader couldn't back off, he had to interrupt our celebration to tell us, and we just couldn't believe it!"

It sounded all absurd even to his own ears, but that didn't stop him from talking, saying every little thing he could remember from the most recent dream, almost afraid it could disappear from a moment to another.

"This time I got a few names. Our leader was Arthur, among the others I remember Bors, Gawain, Dagonet, Lancelot," he hesitated for a second before continuing, "Tristan… and me, I was Galahad. We also talked about Romans, Bishop Germanius was the one supposed to free us, but he broke his word and commanded this other quest, to rescue a roman family threatened by Saxons… we were also worried about the Woads."

Looking at the ground, trying to focus and see if he could extrapolate anything else from his memory of the dream, Will wasn't aware of the look Hannibal was giving him. His expression was indecipherable, but there was a sparkle in his eyes, something burning deep inside.

When Will finally lifted his gaze on him, they exchanged the longest look before he started talking again.

"Look, I know I sound crazy, but I swear, it was all so *real*, it seemed more like a memory than a dream-"

"Will" Hannibal called him, his voice low and hoarse, almost sensual.

"Yes?" He swallowed hard before answering.

"Do you realize you're talking about King Arthur and the knights of the round table?"

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

I am SO SO SO sorry it took me so long to update!!!! But, ya know, it being summer and all...I got too caught up relaxing and stuff!! bear with me!!

As usual, reviews and critics are much much appreciated!

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.

Enjoy :D

"What?"

Hannibal kept his gaze fixed on him without answering.

"King Arthur?" repeated Will, staring at him in disbelief.

"Yes."

"*The* King Arthur?"

"I believe there's only one."

"But it's a fairytale" stated Will, still eyeing him. The corners of Hannibal's mouth titled upwards a little at the expected answer, his gaze moving to the first-aid kit and taking a moment before returning to Will.

"Everyone has at least once heard of King Arthur and his brave Knights. Only few know that the legend is actually inspired by an existent historical figure."

They exchanged a long stare, Will's eyes wide, trying to extrapolate from the psychiatrist's expression any sign of derision, having never heard of this true story behind the myth, Hannibal's eyes steady, locked with his, calm and confident as always.

"With this real Arthur, there doesn't happen to be also a Galahad, or any of the other knights, by any chance?"

Hannibal observed him: Will's posture suggested disbelief and curiosity, reluctant to believe such a story but wanting to hear more of it nonetheless.

"Yes Will, that happens to be the case" he replied, making him freeze right where he sat on the stool.

Will blinked a few times, his eyes frantically looking all around, trying not to let his thoughts wander off to easy but not believable conclusions. Those words seemed to imply much more than they meant, suggesting a road he refused to take, to even acknowledge because of its ridiculousness and insanity.

Even so, he found himself wanting to hear more about it, wanting to find inconsistencies with the dreams he had had in order to allow him to brush the ridiculous idea that was now nudging him aside, but at the same time desperately wanting to find a reasonable explanation for the overlapping reality and for those weird dreams his subconscious gave birth to. All considering, neither option was preferable, both implying that he was going insane, this time for real.

Given the silence that followed his last sentence, Hannibal was in no hurry to tell further details, instead leaving his last words linger in the room and sink in Will's mind. He could almost see the chaotic rummaging of his thoughts, his restless eyes darting all over the floor being proof of it, as well as his deepening frown. Smirking a bit to himself, he pondered leaving him with only this much information, and call it a night. He was, after all, suffering from a concussion from the crash, even if he seemed fine enough.

"Let's talk about this tomorrow, Will. For the time being, you need to rest."

Will's eyes darted up meeting Hannibal's firm gaze, pushing his chaotic thoughts aside.

"Wait, no, I-" He shut his mouth as Hannibal lifted his hand, silencing him.

"No Will, you almost surely have a concussion. Even if you feel fine right now, your body needs to rest and recover."

"My body is *fine*" he almost whined, huffing a bit. Hannibal looked at him like a parent looking at his whiny kid who doesn't want to go to bed yet.

"Will" he said in a commanding tone that admitted no reply. Will gave in, snorting a bit more, standing up and walking out of the kitchen, following his lead toward the stairs.

Hannibal made way, walking ahead of him but glancing every now and then over his shoulder, making sure Will was following and ready to catch him if he were to falter. He led him to a bedroom, its king-size bed covered in dark classy coverlet, the white sheets immaculate, a sober chandelier hanging from the ceiling, the soft light grazing the furniture in a yellowish caress.

Will put a hand on the coverlet, following with his fingertips the intricate pattern, appreciating its softness.

"I will come and check on you during the night, wake you up if I feel there's a need. The bathroom is right there. Call me if there's anything you need."

Will turned around, noticing that Hannibal had brought him nightclothes and towels.

"Thank you but please, don't mind me."

"As a doctor and a friend, it is my duty and pleasure." Hannibal smiled a bit, moving to the door. "Now rest, Will. Sleep well."

"Thank you, Doctor Lecter. Goodnight." And with a click of the door, he was alone.

After a moment, feeling a bit uncomfortable in an unfamiliar bedroom, Will went to the bathroom turning the light on and looking at his reflection in the mirror above the sink. He brushed his hair to the side to take a better look at the cut on his forehead, touching it lightly with the tips of his fingers, hissing at the slight feeling of burn. It was a long cut, right below his hairline, but he noticed that Hannibal's bandaging was flawless, and probably had to thank medical school for that.

Letting his hand drop and his hair fall back in place in its usual untidy locks, Will sighed heavily, his reflection sighing with him. He had possibly never looked worse, he almost looked like a ghost, pale skin and wide eyes, dark bags under them. He turned the water on and splashed some on his face, meeting his eyes in the mirror, drops running down his neck and hanging on his eyelashes. He squeezed his eyes shut, passing his hands on his face, drying himself up a bit.

He blinked a few times before his breath stopped in his lungs, his mouth slightly open in surprise. For a second there he thought he had seen someone else staring back, someone whose face he had seen once, reflected in a water bowl, lighted up by the candlelight. Someone with *a month-old beard*. Now there was only him, a very startled and tired version of him, but definitely him, reflected in the mirror.

"I am going completely insane" he muttered to himself, too tired to panic over it, simply brushing this episode aside and moving towards the bed, turning the light off as he exited the bathroom. He carefully removed his clothes but did not touch the ones Hannibal had placed on the drawer, knowing he would drench them in sweat during the night, opting to sleep only in his boxers and undershirt, even if it meant that the following morning he'd have to wear the sweater on his bare skin.

He sank in the bed, tucking the sheets and duvet tight around him, and switched the light off, the room now engulfed in the dark, and closed his eyes. His head felt light, and ached a bit, probably from the concussion but also from his too many thoughts. He let out a shaky breath, now starting to feel his body aching all over, a dull pain coming from every muscle he had, the exhaustion flooding over him and swallowing him whole, the ache fading as he drifted in a deep sleep.

Flashes of battlefield grounds, swords clattering, blood spilling, voices screaming filled his vision before fading into nothing.

The taste of wine filled his mouth, laugher ringed in his ears, familiar faces surrounded him, then it all blurred away.

Then felt lips moving hungrily on his own, teeth scraping on his lover lip, kissing him deep, like he wanted to eat him up, barely allowing him to breathe. As startled as he was, Will was barely responding to it, the sensation overwhelming. Firm hands were keeping him there, cupping his cheeks, not allowing him to move away. He felt his blood rush through his body, warming his skin, making his heart bump loud in his chest.

The other broke the kiss, making him gasp for air and open his eyes abruptly, the sudden loss leaving him hanging. In the dim light he met a pair of brown eyes a few inches away, staring hungrily, almost famished, behind a few dark strands of hair.

Will was frozen in place, his eyes wide, staring back, like a deer in the headlights.

Tristan let his eyes drop to the floor and bowed his head a little, letting out a trembling breath. He locked their gaze one last time before turning way, his hands leaving his cheeks, the hot feeling of his touch still lingering on his skin, and in a second he was gone.

Will stumbled forward, mouth slightly open, breath rushed, not really realizing what just happened. Then it all faded to black.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

After what felt like forever, this fic will get back on its tracks.
Sorry and thank you for all those who will keep on reading this after all this time!! Hope you like this new chapter and those that will come next.

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.

As usual, reviews and critics are much much much appreciated :)

Enjoy :D

Will woke with a start, sitting up abruptly, sheets rustled from his restless sleep and clothes hanging from his chest, damp with sweat. He blinked a few times in the dark, taking in the surroundings while trying to calm his ragged breath and frantic heart, remembering only a few seconds later where he was.

Groaning, he pressed the heels of his palms on his eyes until seeing stars and let out a long trembling breath. What were those dreams? Ok, they were actually better than the ones he usually had: flashbacks of murders committed by others in all their gory details, with him sometimes being the perpetrator, sometimes the helpless victim. He always had a hard time shaking those obscene dreams off him, but these ones...these ones he couldn't forget for an entire different reason.

The cut on his forehead was throbbing, his head feeling both light and heavy at the same time, every muscle in his body aching. He wasn't surprised, after having crashed into a tree it was the least he could expect as an aftereffect. Damn, he was lucky it hadn't gone worse.

Will let himself fall against the mattress, eyes still shut and covered, and breathed out. His hands ran down his scruffy cheeks and came to a halt with the fingertips barely touching his lips, a lingering pressure burned deep in them, the ghost of a kiss. He gulped soundly, feeling heat spreading on his cheeks and goosebumps on his forearms. Stiffly, he shifted on the side and blinked in the dark of the room, a pale shadow of light barely peeking from under the door.

Despite the uneasiness deeply set in his gut, he couldn't fight the exhausted feeling that washed over him, lulling him to sleep, gradually silencing his screaming thoughts. He didn't fight his heaving eyelids, an edge of curiousness accompanying him into a deep sleep once again.

In the morning he couldn't tell if the hands he had felt caressing his face between wake and sleep were a leftover from his dreams or real.

After having shared a rich and sumptuous breakfast and undergone a checkup and a change of bandages, Will would have wanted nothing more than to continue their conversation from the previous night, aching for clarity and a reasonable explanation for all that's been birthed from his mind in the last days. Sure, he'd been derisive of even the possibility that had been nudging the recess of his mind since Hannibal had mentioned King Arthur, and he sure wasn't gonna put it into words, the absurdity of it laughable, but even so he couldn't help but be curious about it, like a piece of a puzzle that could possibly fit and could as well not.

Sadly, fate wouldn't have him have his way with things, for Jack called him before Hannibal was even done placing the new gauze on his forehead: another body had been discovered, and his presence was needed as soon as he could get there.

"I'm afraid I have to leave" Will told him, as soon as Jack hung up.

"Jack confides in your abilities, would have surprised me hadn't you gotten any call from him."

"There's a body, there's a call?"

"There's a body, there's a call" Hannibal agreed, the ghost of a smile upturning the corners of his lips, his hands pressing lightly on the plaster to keep it in place on his forehead, before descending slowly onto his cheeks. Firmly, they made Will tilt his head up, meeting Hannibal's gaze. "You might feel some mild aches in your body due to the accident, but nothing that would incapacitate you. Since your car isn't up to function, I have to suggest either a taxi or someone from the FBI to come pick you up: I would drive you, but I'm afraid my first patient will be here before I get the chance to be back."

"Oh no, I wouldn't ask that of you. I troubled you enough already."

"Let me assure you, Will, having you was no trouble at all."

Will managed to smiled at him, lowering his gaze and doing so freeing himself from the warm grasp of Hannibal's hands. As he stood up from the same stool he had occupied only a few hours before, the lingering feeling on his cheeks almost had him raise his hand to touch them, to rub it away with his own, for it reminded him too much of the firm cage that had him trapped while warm lips and scruffy cheeks slid against his.

He didn't mention his last dream, nor the previously discussed ones as he gathered his things and called for a cab: as much as he would have liked to (of course skipping on some details), that was a conversation that was not to be started only to be interrupted after only a few minutes by the arrival of his ride.

As expected, the cab honked outside the door after just a short while.

"Goodbye Will. Till next time."

"Yes, goodbye. And thank you. For everything."

"Don't be late for our next appointment" Hannibal teased with a light smirk.

Huffing out a chuckle and a "I won't" Will waved a little goodbye and went out, into the cold morning and into another chilling day. Into another crime scene.

As expected, the case was as complex as it's always been, corpses broken and arranged to form exquisite works of art, gory and beautiful, a heavy reminder that the Chesapeake Ripper was still on the loose, and not one step closer to be caught.

The feeling of impotence weighted terribly on Will, for yes, he could sense and revive how it's all been done, but that hasn't been of any help in the investigation so far, only making him soak up the killer's mind a bit more every time he could see his work and get lost in it. As the saying goes, once you open a door you're able to peek and see what's on the other side, but you can't control what comes through…and sometimes you cannot even close the door anymore.

Jack for his part seemed equally frustrated, if not even more, since he had to worry about Will's mental state on top of it all, but on the plus side, his mind was solid and firm as a rock, as 'bedrock' as he used to say.

As days went on, Will kept himself occupied between classes and other cases that required his empathy to get a push in the right direction. As Hannibal had said, his body had started aching from the impact, a dull pain settled deep in his bones, every move reminding him what happened a few days prior, and that he was in need of a new car for his was still at the mechanic's.

One late evening, as he lied exhausted among his dogs, fingers buried in their thick fur, Will let his mind wander for he was too tired to keep it reigned. He thought about all those dreams, those people, those times he had no recognition of, but also so familiar…those faces, he felt, were family to him, closer than any blood tie. Yet, he didn't know them. He knew them, but at the same time didn't. It was both frustrating and disheartening.

With a groan, he took up and went to bed, removing his clothes but not bothering to fold them, and turned off the lights. Pulling the duvet over his chest, Will let out a long sigh and tried to quiet his mind for a moment: what was he to do about the matter?

Avoiding it hadn't worked so far, for those flashes of another life had kept appearing in his dreams, sometimes barely images, sounds, smells, flavors, sometimes full-on scenes that played in front of his eyes like a recital with him as the main actor, but barely enough to leave him with tons of questions. He hadn't had the time nor the occasion to speak with Hannibal again about all this, so his brain kept running on empty, not going anywhere, always rummaging on the few memories he had, all so feeble he felt they were about to escape from his grasp were he to get distracted.

'This isn't going anywhere' he thought to himself, 'it feels like I'm peeking through the curtains that separate stage and audience, only getting fragments and pieces but not understanding the plot.'

In the dark quiet of the room that seemed to engulf him and swallow him whole, feeling as safe as he could feel with raging murderers on the loose (he knew better than to think that four walls were enough to stop any of them if they were to target him directly), in the intimacy of the night, a urge came to him.

"Galahad" he murmured, his voice barely audible, the name foreign only on his lips. He tried to visualize his reflection as he saw it in the water bowl and in the mirror, with the unforgettable beard and unruly, well, *unrulier* hair, and tried again. "Galahad" he repeated, "Galahad" again and again and again he kept on going, like a mantra that would eventually make sense to him but that only succeeded in making the name sound like a jumble of sounds with no meaning, as it always happens when you repeat a single word countless times.

Huffing out of frustration he finally gave up, deciding that that had been the most idiotic way to spend the last ten or so minutes, and turned on the side closing his eyes again. Despite his exhaustion, falling asleep was always hard for him, but in the end managed to quiet his mind long enough for oblivion to wash over him and, as his eyelids got heavier, for a split second it didn't feel like he was in his bed anymore.

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

This was one of my favorite scenes from King Arthur...of course added something :D

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.

As usual, reviews and critics are much much much appreciated :)

Enjoy :D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After what felt like only a few seconds he opened his eyes again, as the cold wind and the snowflakes tickled his skin. The horse neighed at his side, and he clutched the reins harder, keeping the steed close to him as he carefully walked his way on the iced surface of the lake. Near him, the other knights were doing the same, weighing every step, following their leader towards the other side of the gorge.

Every few steps an ominous creaking could be heard, making him either freeze the motion or back up for it seemed to be coming from right below him, heart hammering in his chest. A few gasps and squeaks were coming from the crowd following them, mostly peasants on foot or with a small cart, slowly advancing despite the slippery surface and the ignorance of the ice's thickness, trusting blindly the brave warriors that were leading them.

Gawain on his right, the blond locks flapping in the wind, usually so talkative was now very silent, him too paying close attention to every step. The knowledge of the Saxons closing up on them and the hazard of the path they were on were both hanging heavily in the chilly air, silencing every unnecessary chatter, leaving only heavy breaths and startled inhales.

Feeling observed, Will lifted his gaze from the ground just in time to see Tristan, who was a few steps ahead, glancing at him above his shoulder, turning around immediately after. Even with the heavy atmosphere hanging around them, he couldn't help feeling self conscious. His skin burned with the memory of the touch of his hands, and he rubbed his arms in a gesture that could pass for an attempt to warm himself up but was really an attempt to cool down. This was certainly not the time to think about the previous night.

Snapping out of it, he saw Arthur lifting a hand, commanding them all to stop. As everyone stilled, as every single horse put down the last hoof, a distant drumming filled their ears. Realizing that the Saxons were even closer than expected put them all on edge as the group resumed its slow advancing.

After only a few step, without a command, their feet stopped again, and the knights exchanged a few resolute glances, knowing too well what they had to do despite being almost

on the other end of the icy surface. Arthur probably realized it too since he breathed heavily and turned around, setting his firm stare on them.

"Knights…" he said, that word implying what everyone was thinking.

"Well, I'm tired of running" replied Bors, looking at them, then felt the need to add "and these Saxons are so close behind my ass is hurtin' " as a matter of fact.

"Never liked looking over my shoulder anyway" said Tristan, before doing exactly that, looking at the others before setting his gaze on him. Will could see the edge of his eyes crinkling with amusement, for he knew he had been caught in the act earlier, and found entertainment in knowing that the other got the double meaning of his words.

"Be a pleasure to put an end to this racket" he heard Gawain say from his right.

"And finally get to look at the bastards" Will then added, finally breaking their eye-lock and moving his gaze to their leader.

"Here. Now."

Dagonet's words seemed to close the discussion, if it ever was a discussion since they all agreed on the matter, only Lancelot looking a bit resigned, and as Arthur called their quartermaster, the knights started taking the weapons down from their steeds and placing them in a line, facing the way they've come from and from where the Saxons are to make their entrance. Jols and his men quickly took care of their horses while the rest of the party passed them on wobbly legs and got to safe ground.

As Will was making his way to where he had placed his sword and shield on the left side of the line, carrying his bow and quiver with him, his arm was grabbed and had to stop on his tracks to look at Tristan, who leaned close to him and whispered:

"If everything goes as planned we'll be on our way to join the caravan soon. But if doesn't and the hotheads here start charging, we are the rearguard. We fight from the distance as we do in formation. Join the fight only if they're too close."

"Or if the blood calls."

Tristan smirked at the remark.

"You know me too well" he replied with a smile, both knowing that the scout, despite being one of the best archer of the group and as such assigned to the rearguard with him, couldn't help but need to feel the flesh of his enemies under his sword, to get stained from their blood, the intimacy of the macabre dance that was every duel bringing him exquisite pleasure. A moment later, Will felt the grip on his arm disappear for the other had let him go and had now cast his eyes on his lips.

"I'll see you later in this life" Tristan said, as he flicked his eyes back to the other's, "or in another."

Will gulped a little under his dark gaze, and nodded his goodbye as he spun around and passed the others, going back to his position. As he placed the quiver down he noticed Gawain watching him intently. He lifted his eyebrows, as if asking 'what', but only got a half smile in return before the other went back to checking his equipment.

Not long after Guinevere, the Woad girl they rescued from the household's torture chamber, joined them in line with a spare bow and arrows while Arthur gave instruction to Ganis to lead the party and keep to the coastline to Hadrian's Wall in order to avoid encounters with other Saxons. The pope's pupil too, Alecto, despite the young age proved to be a brave young man, wanting to stay and fight among the knights but was denied the chance, since the mission had taken place to bring him back safely.

As the drums got closer, shaking the very earth, the party finally left, leaving eight brave warriors to face about 200 enemies on an icy ground. They stood there, feet planted, eyes casted at the entrance of the lake, bow and arrow in hand, ready to be drawn and shot.

Will could feel the rhythm of the drums resonating in his chest, echoing beneath the skin and armor, growing as the enemy army came into view at the opposite end of the gorge. Their heavy steps seemed to fall into rhythm with the sound of the drums they were hitting. As they steadily displayed their numbers in a disordered line-up, the sound slowly ceased.

"Hold until I give the command" he heard Arthur say, brow set.

In the distance resounded the Saxons' commands that stopped the army's stomping, and he saw the bald bearded guy the soldiers seemed to refer to call for an archer that quickly drew his longbow and shoot an arrow in the air. The whistling sound of it riving through came to an end long before their feet, not worrying any of knights at his sides.

"I believe they're waiting for an invitation. Bors, Tristan" Arthur called, them being the ones at the far ends of the line.

"They're far out of range" Guinevere argued, based on the Saxons' shot, while Tristan drew multiple arrows at once. Upon release they pierced through the air, quick and lethal, taking down multiple soldiers on the far right of their formation, while Bors' one took care of a man that had made the mistake of stepping too far from the rest of the army, singling himself out as a perfect target. They took the enemies by surprise if the astonished "oof" of the ones that fell and angry expressions of those still standing were anything to go by. Soon after they shouted a command and started advancing towards the eight, not paying much attention to their heavy steps, dark banners and flags flapping in the cold wind.

"Aim for the wings of the ranks, make them cluster" instructed their leader.

Will shot arrow after arrow along with the others, his fingers quickly drawing and releasing like it's all he has ever done, efficiently taking down lots of enemy soldiers while these, not wanting to stand out as easy targets and be the next ones to fall, kept converging to the middle while their leader shouted angrily to keep their ranks. Despite their arrows blacking out the sun so many were being shot, the Saxons kept on advancing, the heavy stomping of their boots effectively causing the ice to slightly crack under their weight but not break, till they were too close for comfort.

"It's not gonna break. Back!" Arthur stood up from his crouching as he was feeling the ice with his hands, and motioned for them to step back. "Fall back! Prepare for combat."

They all drew back, Will keeping the bow while the others left theirs on the ground to take their weapon of choice: axes, swords and shields, daggers. After a few tense seconds, right on his left he saw Dagonet drop the sword and pick up his axe, just before changing towards the enemy while shouting at the top of his lungs. Bors screamed his name, knowing that it was a suicide to get into their archers' range, while Arthur told them to cover him, all of them going back to their bows.

As soon as Dagonet stopped right between them and the Saxons army, as soon as he lifted the axe to smash the ice, Will drew an arrow and shot, for the enemies were calling for their archers and crossbowers to take him down.

The dull sound of the axe hitting the ice, the whistling of theirs and the enemy's arrows piercing through the air, their shouts and commands, all blurred in the chaos of those moments. Too soon, a resounding crack echoed in the gorge.

"The ice is breaking!!"

The distant shout barely audible in his ears, Will kept on shooting arrows in an adrenaline-fueled rush, kept going like he had fire in his veins, not feeling the pain of his frost-bitten fingers, not even aware if any of the others had been hit or not. He kept going till he saw Dagonet stumble and fall, arrows now sticking out from his torso.

"Dag!" Bors screamed, while Arthur dropped his weapon and rushed towards him.

A chill in his chest, Will started shooting again fueled by fear, pain, and anger, while Dagonet picked himself up and resumed his ice-breaking motion with a pained scream. Before Arthur reached him, his axe descended on the lake's iced surface, the impact of the last hit spreading a web of cracks towards the Saxons, them providing the greater weight in the area.

As the ice broke into countless floating pieces, making the enemy soldiers run back while most of them were being swallowed by the lake, he saw Dagonet fall face first into the icy water. Arthur finally got at his side, he immediately plunged his hand in and grabbed him by the collar, trying to pull him out as fast as he could before it was too late. Screaming his name, Bors hastily grabbed a shield and ran towards them meeting them halfway, protecting them from the rain of arrows. They couldn't move quickly, their friend's soaked clothes and heavy armor slowed them down, and to their horror the cracks in the ice had started running in their direction.

"Pull back! Arthur!!" came Lancelot's scream.

The ground started shaking under his feet as he was again drawing his bow, making Will falter in his stance and look at the ice below him: he could see tiny cracks just below the surface. Bors and Arthur were still dragging Dagonet back, out of the enemy archers' range as these kept shooting arrows at them despite their numbers getting decimated by the frozen ground.

"Help us!"

Gawain and Tristan ran to help them, leaving only three to cover. Will took down as many as he could, shooting and screaming with wrath. As soon as they got their companion back to them, Bors kneeling over him, Will heard his hoarse plea.

"Dagonet! Stay with me!" He repeated the same words over and over, trying to wake his friends from his motionless sleep, his lips now purple, lifeless.

Riding his rage Will bent down to grab another arrow, his hand touching the icy ground, and as he blinked, he was now immersing it in a fresh coat of snow.

Chapter End Notes

Have you guys noticed that Galahad and Tristan are the ones who use the bow the most? And that they usually stay behind the others, like they're guarding the rear? For reference, see both when they charge the Woads attacking Bishop Germanus' carriage (Galahad closed one wing of the V formation, never leaves the horse and keeps using bow and arrow, while Tristan, who closed the other wing, at some point gets down to duel) and at the roman estate when the knights break into the torture chamber...guess who stays behind on horse, guarding the entrance? :D

EDIT: My bad!!the white horses got me! in the V formation we got Gawain on one end and Galahad on the other, with Tristan right before him....which is even better tbh :D

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

Damn you season finale, for being so incredibly awesome and unforgettable. I should be studying and instead I'm writing this fic because of the Hannigram feels. Dammit.

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.
As usual, reviews and critics are much much much appreciated :)

Enjoy :D

The cold startled him, making Will retrieve his hand quickly. His heart was still beating loudly from the adrenaline of the events he had just relived, the sound of it filling his ears. A chill ran down his spine, making him realize that he was kneeling in the snow dressed only in his nightclothes, boxer and undershirt, his skin frozen and numb. He pushed himself off the ground and looked feverishly around him.

"My name is Will Graham" he whispered to himself between heavy breaths, his voice feeble and quivering, barely reaching his ears, seemingly swallowed by the dark that surrounded him. "It's-" he looked quickly at his watch " 4.30 in the morning."

Almost 5 hours had passed since he had gone to sleep. He cast a panicked look around him, growing more and more agitated, his eyes seeing only a few trees and a snow-covered field in the darkness. He could barely feel his hands and feet, meaning he had been out there for quite a while.

"A-and…I don't know where I am." God knows where he could be.

'Don't panic' Will thought to himself, blowing some air onto his icy hands and rubbing them together in a vain attempt to warm up, regaining only a bit of sensibility. He took a couple trembling breaths, trying to calm himself: his mind needed to be as lucid as could be.

As soon as his ragged breaths and frantic heartbeats ceased from filling his ears, Will heard some faint noise in the distance and, focusing and listening intently, realized it was barking.

Grasping this tiny hope, he started taking some wobbly steps in that direction, soon understanding it was the right path since he could discern some traces of his earlier unconscious passage in the snow. After a few moments, relief washed over him as he could make out the silhouette of his house in the distance, barely seeable in the moonlight, and he took up speed making his way home.

By the time he stepped on the porch the dogs were in hysterics, having been calling for him from inside the door probably since he had left. He shushed them as he got in, petting them to

calm them down as they swarmed around him, making sure he was safe.

His feet felt sore and frost-bitten as he walked to the bathroom, picking up a blanket on his way. As his eyes met his reflection in the mirror over the sink, a well-known bearded face overlapped his own, the image of it flickering like static. Unable to deal with it at the moment, he turned to fill a basin with hot water, sat on the ground with his back to the wall and immersed his muddy feet, starting to scrub them with his bare hands. Once done, he sat in the corner of the room and wrapped himself in the blanket, hugging his knees, seeking warmth.

Even with his house providing a safe harbor, Will didn't feel safe at all. His mind had escaped from his grip and control, even more than he had feared to be the case in the last period, and there was no telling what could happen next. He was afraid to even close his eyes.

His head bent till the forehead was resting on his knees, Will didn't know how much time passed, but as he heard his phone ring he cast a glance outside the window and realized it was almost sunrise.

"Hello?" he answered with a groggy voice.

"Good morning Will."

"Doctor Lecter" he recognized, hearing his voice tamped down a bit the mess of emotions that was running wild within him.

"I hope I didn't wake you."

"To be honest I don't know if I even slept last night" Will admitted.

"How come?"

"I…I might have had an episode." The silence that followed that statement seemed to last forever in his ears.

"Are you okay now, Will?"

"I…I don't know."

"I'm coming over."

Less than an hour later he heard a car stopping outside his house. Will opened the door letting the dogs out, still wrapped in the blanket but having put on a pair of pants for decency, and found his psychiatrist and friend waiting on the other side, a concerned expression softening his features.

"Hello, Will."

"Hello, Doctor Lecter."

He saw Hannibal taking in his appearance and, as he probably looked worse for wear, putting a gentle hand on his cheek, almost a caress, effectively grounding his fragile mind.

"Tell me what happened."

Hannibal made him sit in the armchair and after making him a hot cup of tea, took a seat beside him.

"I went to bed the other night as usual around midnight and uh…I don't remember much before opening my eyes and finding myself kneeling outside, in the middle of a field covered in snow. I couldn't see my house from there, only my footprints and the distant barking of the dogs led me back." Will stole a glance at him before looking away again. "I was too afraid to sleep after" he confessed with a bitter smile.

"You look very pale but you're not hurt, are you?"

"No, I'm okay."

He hummed his agreement, then let Will take a couple sips of the warm beverage before asking the question that most interested him.

"Do you remember the dream you were having before regaining your senses?"

Will didn't move a muscle, weighing his answer. "Bits and pieces" he answered truthfully, stealing a glance at him.

"Would you elaborate for me, please?"

"It was cold. I…I was fighting among the others, side by side. We had stayed behind to protect the people from an enemy army that was following, now in sight. We were all fighting feverishly, their numbers surpassing ours greatly. One of us didn't make it, he…he took a risk and died because of it."

Will could feel Hannibal's eyes on him, like he were being studied.

"I hear hesitation in your voice, and you didn't give any name nor any detail." He tilted his head a bit, as if to get a better look at him. "You're denying your own recalling of the dream."

"You would too if you were dreaming about fairytales as if they were real."

"If I remember correctly, I already told you that the legend of King Arthur is not a mere fairytale."

Will scoffed at the mention of it. "Yes, well, given that I only know this much about the legend, how am I supposed to even take in consideration that-"He stopped midsentence.

"That you could possibly be reliving memories long buried?" Hannibal finished for him.

"Not my memories."

"Who you were and who you are now, is it not the same person?"

Will looked at him with a skeptical look in his eyes. Wasn't *he* supposed to be the one going mad?

"The events that occurred in the time between your childhood and now, do they make you a different person?"

"We're talking Middle ages, Doctor. Centuries ago. Not a 30-year gap."

"Despite being only 30 years ago you have no recollection of your early years and most of your childhood, yet you do know you've lived them. And sometimes fragments of memory come back to you, usually when triggered by something that provides as a mean of connection to a past long forgotten. Those buried most deeply within us manage to reach the surface only when our defenses are lowered."

"When we sleep."

"Exactly."

"Still, my childhood is part of my life, of the years I've lived from birth till now."

"Humour me. The memories of your childhood sometimes come back to you, so do these ancient ones. What separates them from the person you are now is only time and events, in one case more than the other. But how is it any different?"

"Are we talking about reincarnation, Doctor?

"Are you such a devoted Christian that you reject the very possibility of it?"

Touché.

"I don't really know what to think right now."

Silence fell on them. Will, warming his hands on the cup, was lost in contemplation, a new idea making way into his mind, like a single drop of ink staining a whole cup of water. Absorbed by his thoughts, he didn't notice the barely concealed grin that curved the edges of the doctor's lips.

"You should rest now, Will. You look exhausted."

"I am" he agreed with a huff.

"You should try to get some sleep." Will's head snapped up, eyes wide with dread. "I'll watch over you so that you may rest without worry."

"I can't ask that of you" Will murmured, a bit taken aback.

"And you are not, since I'm offering. Besides, I'm concerned for your wellbeing and my schedule is free this morning so you see, it really is not a problem."

"I've imposed too much on you already, I can't-"

"I won't accept a 'no' as an answer."

They stared at each other for a bit, till Will finally gave in with a "Thank you" and went back to his bed after having let the dogs back in. Hannibal gave him some sleeping pills that he had brought with him since he knew the other hadn't slept much and possibly needed some help relaxing. After gulping down a couple with the rest of the tea, now lukewarm, he laid down and pulled the covers over him, turning on his side. From this position he could see the doctor's legs from the knee down, as he sat on the armchair outside the door with some of the dogs laying lazily at his feet.

"Rest well, Will."

"Thank you, Hannibal."

As he felt his body slowly relax and sight unfocusing, Will heard him call for him.

"Will?"

"Yes?" he managed to answer, voice thick with sleep.

"What was the name of the knight that died in your dream?"

"Dagonet" he mumbled, before finally giving in to unconsciousness.

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Are you ready for some arthurian folklore and historical background? No? Too bad, now you read and learn something. :D
I had to research a little as to not make up anything on the myth!! Had to omit some things to fit the legends to the movie (some poetic licence was taken there!!) but well, hope you like it anyway!

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.
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Enjoy :D

Hannibal, true to his words, had stayed to watch over his sleep till he had heard the rustling of sheets and covers.

"How are you feeling now, Will?" the doctor asked, as he came to his bedside.

"Like a coma patient that just woke up" he croaked out, making the other chuckle.

"That doesn't surprise me. At some point I had to come and check on you, afraid you had inadvertently OD'd on the sleeping pills. I'm quite sure you haven't moved in your sleep at all."

Will pulled himself up in a sitting position and rubbed the leftover sleep out of his eyes. "If how I'm feeling is anything to go by, I'm pretty sure that's exactly what happened." He looked up, meeting Hannibal's amused gaze. "I'm sorry you had to waste your morning like this, but I can't say I'm not happy you stayed."

"Don't mention it, I'll gladly do it whenever you need me to." He glanced at his watch. "I should take my leave now. You seem well and I'm sure you'll want to get your day started."

"Can I offer you breakfast? Or lunch, at his point. As a thank you."

"As much as I would love to, there are a few commissions I need to take care of."

"Alright then. Don't let me keep you."

Will got out of bed and followed Hannibal to the living room, crossing arms on his chest as he leaned on the wall while the other retrieved his coat and petted briefly the dogs that have kept him company. His presence alone in the room was enough to make Will feel at peace,

like a lifeboat when you're lost at sea and the waves seem to be trying to swallow you in their deep blue jaws.

"Will I see you tonight then?" Hannibal asked as he turned to him.

"Sure."

"Good. We can discuss more of your dreams if you'd like to. I should have some books that could provide an interesting read for you, I'll see if I can dig them up."

"I'm not sure I want to dwell more on all this."

Hannibal looked at him for a long time, seeming to be carefully considering his words before replying.

"Wouldn't you like to find out what's the cause of those dreams? So far avoiding the matter has proved not to be the best option."

"I have to agree with you on that" he conceded with a sigh. The doctor replied with a smile.

"Have a good day, Will."

"You too, Doctor Lecter."

As the door closed behind him, Will moved back to his room to get changed.

"Hello Will. Please, come in."

Will smiled his greetings as he made way into the by now familiar studio and took off his coat. Both comfortable in the quiet of the room, they calmly took seat in the usual armchairs, facing each other. Hannibal waited for him to speak, quietly observing him as the other squirmed a bit under the weight of his gaze, stealing a few glances in his direction.

"I guess I can't avoid the matter any longer."

"The topic of our sessions is completely up to you, Will."

He slowly exhaled. "Alright then…let's talk about King Arthur." Will said, a deprecating smile curving his lips in a mocking half-grin.

"What would you like to know?"

"Did he really exist?"

Hannibal rose and moved to the closest bookcase to browse the titles, as he took his time to answer before taking a book out and opening it, shuffling its pages as he walked back towards Will.

"Although the tradition places him either in the late 5th and early 6th century or in the medieval setting of the 12th century, historians are not in agreement on the historical background of the character behind the legend. Some place him in the late 2nd century, as the name of Lucius Artorius Castus is first recorded: a high-ranking commander in the Roman army, it is believed that he fought against Sarmatians in eastern Europe early in his military career. After their defeat, given their valor in fight and their cavalry skills, the Romans spared their lives and had them and their progeny join their forces. Artorius Castus was later assigned in the command of a numerous of Sarmatians based and campaigning around Hadrian's Wall." He bent over Will, showing him the passage where he had read those infos and the images attached. "The theory says that Castus' exploits at the head of a contingent of mounted troops were the basis for later, similar traditions about 'King Arthur', and, further, that the name 'Artorius' or 'Arthur' became a title, or honorific."

Will hummed, his hand reaching for the book, the paper feeling smooth under his fingers. According to his dreams, the knights were actually Sarmatians, so it fitted with the historical proof.

"Some scholars believe that the legend was based on Ambrosius Aurelianus, a powerful Roman-British leader in Britain. He was renowned for his campaigns against the Saxons, and there is some speculation that he may have commanded the British forces at the Battle of Badon Hill."

Hannibal turned the pages for him, till a picture made Will's heart miss a beat, his eyes growing impossibly wide as for a second the hollow neighing of horses and clopping of hoofs filled his ears.

"Wait."

The doctor eyed him curiously. "Is something the matter, Will?"

"This place…" He took the book from Hannibal's hands, and observed closely the picture. "It looks hauntingly familiar." Will looked at him over his glasses, tilting the book in his direction.

The doctor, leaning over the other, took a glance at the picture that had Will so interested. "The gates of Hadrian's Wall."

"I've been there, in my dreams. But I swear, I've never seen it before in this life." He turned the pages back and forth, then looked up. "Is there no picture of Badon Hill?"

"The location of the battle of Badon Hill is currently unknown with certainty. There are a few hypothesis, but none is supported by definite evidence."

So much for validating his dreams then.

"What about the knights?"

"I'm afraid I don't have much knowledge on their historical background. There is much to say about them in the folklore though, maybe there's some truth to it. For example the one you

mentioned this morning, Dagonet, according to the myth was Arthur's beloved jester as well as a Knight, one who saw himself as a courageous warrior and would present himself as such."

"A jester?" Will laughed, incredulous. "I don't know about that part, since he seemed very taciturn man to me, but from his actions he really was brave…and selfless."

"I guess some poetic license was taken, then."

"Definitely" he scoffed.

"What was your name?" Hannibal asked with nonchalance.

"Galahad" he replied, letting the other take the book back into his hands.

"Ah, the 'Perfect Knight'. Known for his courage, gentleness, courtesy and chivalry. He was also the one that accomplished the quest to retrieve the Holy Grail and, upon fulfilling his duty, requested that he died and ascended to Heaven. No other man ever achieved such honor, and the Grail was never to be seen again on this earth."

"Sounds pretentious" Will commented under his breath. "And tiresome."

"Tiresome?"

"Perfection is not interesting so much as the flaws of a person. Only with those you can witness change, be it for better or worse."

Hannibal stilled after that sentence, and kept his eyes fixed on the man seated in the armchair he was leaning over. What a wonderful riddle he was. He smiled a bit to himself, turning around as to not let him see the mask slip. "I must say I agree."

Will rubbed his face tiredly. "I don't know, it all still seems too unreal to me" he said, exhaling loudly.

"Your incapacity to wrap your mind around it may be for the news of all this. Give it time, maybe something else will come to you that will help you break the spell. All you've dreamt of till now were isolated moments, not a continuum, so I understand it may be difficult for you to see the picture as a whole. For now" he said as he closed the book and handed it to Will, "take this home. Read it when you feel like it. If you feel like you're losing grip on reality, read it to remind yourself what is real and what is not."

Will stood up from the armchair, eyeing the book cautiously, not sure what to do with it. After a few moments he took it into his hands.

"Weren't you the one speculating about reincarnation and such?" he asked, curious, looking at the doctor.

"It still is an hypothesis I would like to explore with you, but I care for your well-being more" Hannibal said, his calm gaze grounding him. Will smiled at that, grateful for his friendship, and absent-mindedly shuffled through the pages again as he moved towards the windows. As

he got there he moved the curtains and got lost in his thoughts while looking outside, volume still open in his hands. Hannibal joined him as he came to stand beside him, both enjoying the shared quiet of the evening.

What Will didn't realize was that the reflection in the windowpane wasn't of them, but of two men unquestionably more scruffy and hairy, whose eyes carried the weight of thousands battles.

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

Guess who's back!!

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.
As usual, reviews and critics are much much much appreciated :)

Enjoy :D

Days and weeks passed with no further dreams accompanying his restless nights, despite his conscious mind demanding satisfaction and closure, and his quivering heart skipping a beat every time his gaze met the cover of the book Hannibal lent him. Will had not dared open it, stopping his own hand whenever he found himself reaching for it. The rational part of his mind refused to even consider the possibility his friend and therapist had suggested, but somewhere deep inside of him the thought of it had settled, and with each passing day it had become increasingly less and less foreign. Was it actually possible that him, an anonymous teacher with an outstanding empathy that proved useful to the FBI, born and raised in the US by a simple family, was the reincarnation of a knight from the Middle Ages that served for the legendary King Arthur in the islands of the now known Great Britain?

"Ridiculous" Will whispered to himself, the word echoing in the empty lecture hall. His fingers were absent-mindedly rolling and flipping a pen, throwing it in the air and catching it with no effort, repeating the motion so naturally it seemed this little handy trick was something he'd been doing forever, his body knowing how to move even with his mind not paying any attention.

"What is?"

Startled, Will stopped the familiar motion mid-movement and the pen fell back on the desk only to roll to the edge of it and fall to the floor. He lifted his gaze to find Beverly walking towards him, a small smile softening her hard features.

"Just some weird thoughts" he replied, shrugging nonchalantly.

"Must have been weirder than usual, since you haven't answered your phone for the last hour. Jack has been calling you non-stop, even sent me to get you since he couldn't get in contact."

"Really?" He reached for the phone in his jacket, not finding it, rummaged through the papers on the desk and lastly looked in his briefcase, finally finding it, multiple missed calls notified on the bright screen. "Oh, damn, I left it silenced." He looked back up at her. "Did he need me?"

"Still does. Crime scene, possibly the Chesapeake Ripper. We need you to get a look at it and do your thing before packing up proofs and stuff."

"I'm sorry you had to miss the fun to come pick me up."

"The fun will wait for me. Jack wouldn't let us do anything before you got your way, so they've only took pictures as far as I know." Beverly crossed her arms and lifted her eyebrows at him. "You coming or what? I don't know what the Guru will do to me if I don't bring you."

Will chuckled. Despite being their boss, Jack had this authoritarian dad feel about him that made them all joke about getting grounded were they to misbehave. He still remembers vividly the one time he spoke back to him, at one of the crime scenes of the angels' case, and probably Beverly does too if her comment about her ears ringing was anything to go by.

He packed up as fast as he could and followed her to the parking lot to his own car, which was a rental since his own was requiring longer than he wished to get fixed. It was freezing outside, the chilly wind numbing his rosy cheeks, the feeling echoing in his mind, and as he got in the car and pulled out into the road behind Beverly's car, for a second the steering wheel under his palms felt like reins.

The pendulum inside him wouldn't still, not permitting him to focus and revive the killer's steps through the making of the picture in front of him: a gory shrine of magnificent cruelty, what was once a man was now impossibly bent and broken, the skin a grey canvas where stripes of dried blood drew spirals and patterns. The corpse had been shaped in an arch, rigid from both the rigor mortis and the freezing temperatures, the intestines stretched and tied from the neck to the ankles, the obscene composition pinned on a dying tree in the middle of a frozen forest. A branch was protruding from what once was the now open-cut chest of the dead man, its lungs missing, the heart hanging in front of the open cavity with the tip of the branch piercing through it. The whole canvas flickered in front of his eyes, distant echoes ringing in his ears.

"It's a bow."

Will snapped out of his contemplation of the horrid show, and turned to Jack who was now standing next to him.

"That I gather" he replied, gaze leaving the dark man and returning to the picture in front of him.

"So, what can you tell me?"

"Seems the Chesapeake Ripper, but I can't say for sure."

Jack furrowed his brow, now studying him instead of the corpse.

"What do you mean you can't say for sure?"

"I can't concentrate, can't connect with him." Silence followed that sentence.

"I'm sorry, I'm trying" Will said, almost justifying himself.

"Well, try harder!" Jack's voice boomed through the snowy forest, making everyone stop in their tracks and turn their heads at them. "We didn't wait hours for you to come here and tell me that you're sorry!"

Will exhaled, exhausted already by the confrontation and rubbed his forehead where the beanie didn't cover.

"Try harder" the Guru said, now speaking at a normal volume, before turning and leaving him alone to confront the gruesome composition, his steps crunching snow and snapping pieces of wood while moving away.

The pendulum seemed to swing in time with his heartbeat, which was going remarkably faster than usual, not seeming to calm down. It took an incredibly long time for him to reach out to the killer, for any time he tried he felt himself being grabbed back by other people: presences now familiar in his heart, they seemed to be waiting in the recess of his consciousness, reaching for him, extending their hands towards him.

"Leave me alone" Will whispered under his breath, closing his eyes, inhaling deeply, drawing everything out.

One last swing, then the pendulum stilled.

Will opened his eyes, the scene unfolding, the body bending even more as the branch drew back, pulling on the intestines, before it shot through the back of the bow, tearing the chest open and bringing its gory trophy out for everyone to see.

"I see you" he said, the words rolling on his tongue. "Something sneaked upon you, something you weren't expecting. As it surprised me, I surprised you."

Will slowly walked around it, never blinking, watching intently.

"It reached my heart, stole my breath. As I did to you."

His slow pacing came to a halt in front of the hanging heart. After a beat the bow started to unfold, the intestines untying, the cadaver slowly regaining a human stance while stag-like dark horns started to grow on its head. The bloody patterns painted on its skin seemed to shine blue as a grey hand reached for the hanging heart, now offering it. Will observed as flowers bloomed from the hole left by the branch, coming from the inside, white petals hiding the wound. A sweet scent filled the air, tugging on his heartstrings.

"This is my design."

A blink, and he was once again facing the horrid display.

His breath grew labored as he came back to himself, still feeling the intimacy of it, drowning in the confession the Ripper had shared with him. Black dots started to appear in his peripheral vision and he faltered in his stance, falling on one knee. His throat felt clogged, he

couldn't breathe. Will heard someone call his name, but the sound of it was almost inaudible as the shrieking of a hawk filled his ears. He fell backwards, looking at the sky.

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

Shorter chapter here, hope you like it anyway!

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.
As usual, reviews and critics are much much much appreciated :)

Enjoy :D

As fresh air filled his lungs, his body following the motion of his ride, core swaying but never losing balance, Will secured the grip of his hands on the reins as he opened his eyes and pulled, ordering his steed to a stop. At the feet of the hill they were standing on, a gorgeous valley filled with wild green grass, cornered on both sides by a thick forest, went as far as their eyes could see. What was probably in better times a flowing river, was now only a thin creek, rippling through the meadow like a pulsing vein of freezing water; running along at its side, a strip of stomped soil barely larger than the carriage that was traveling on it, dark horses and shiny armors stomping their way where the natural vegetation had long given in to the path of humans.

"Ah."

Will turned to his right, to the men standing proud on their steeds, their armors scratched and battled but still fiery.

"As promised, the Bishop's carriage" said Gawain, wavy locks barely flapping in the wind. Those words gave birth to a smile on Will's lips.

"Our freedom, Bors" he said to the man next to his blond friend.

"Mmm" Bors mumbled, smacking his lips. "I can almost taste it."

A few snickers ran among them.

"And your passage to Rome, Arthur" spoke the double swords wielder next to their leader, his curly hair as dark as his eyes, his weapons as sharp as his tongue. Lancelot he knew to be his name, as he knew the man carried a special bond with their Roman commander, a thought of his always for him.

Will saw Arthur regard the sentence with a slight nod, as his eyes never left the crew passing through the meadow. What felt like a less than a breath later, a sharp noise pierced through the air and a deaf grunt was heard as a shot soldier of the roman corps fell off his horse,

followed quick by an humongous number of warriors coming out of the woods, shouting as they charged.

"Woads!" the raspy voice of the scout informed them and immediately they all nudged their horses to rush downhill and towards the battle.

Arthur led them as they rode in formation, Will closing one wing of it, weapons in hand. As swords clanged and arrows rained heavily, no roman or woad noticed the fury of the Knights falling upon them.

Will felt like a hawk, his vision focused, watching everything and everyone in the chaos of the field; the wooden spear felt heavy in his hand, held over his shoulder firmly as he rode, its sharp head destined to sink in the blue-tinted skin of their enemies.

By the time their formation crushed into the mess, metal clanging and cutting flesh, most of the roman soldiers of the guard had already fallen to their death. The feral brutality of the Woads was one to fear, but had to bow against the ferocity of the Knights: Arthur sliced and decapitated his way through the enemy ranks, followed suit by Dagonet's sword and Gawain's spear. Arrows tore the air as they kept hitting, deadly and precise, man after man, all shot in rapid succession by the scruffy scout whose ride never faltered nor arrow ever missed.

As he followed these men, Will plunged his spear with brutal force into the torso of an unlucky Woad who happened in his path and, as he reached the mayhem, embraced his bow and arrows, effectively covering the openings left by his companions who were already fighting on the field, all while keeping some sort of range as his role had always been the rearguard.

He noticed a second too late that a Woad had climbed on the carriage, ready to kill its passenger, but was immediately taken down by Tristan who quickly sent a glance in his direction before turning a shooting an arrow into the nearby woods, from where an enemy archer had just tried ineffectively to unsaddle their leader.

Turning his attention back to the battle, Will saw Gawain getting jumped by a Woad and being thrown off his horse; he instantly shot an arrow to the culprit, who got hit just as he had gotten back up from the ground, earning a thankful look from his blond friend before wielding his axe and mace against nearby enemies.

As his horse rode and turned, always moving close to the battlegrounds but never diving in, he focused a second on Tristan who, thirsty for blood, dismounted off his steed with a fluid motion and unsheathed his long sword, its sharp metal shining in the light of day, leaving the ranged battle to him. His vision was interrupted by Dagonet who, riding fast past him, jumped a few Woads right into the stream, taking them down; just as the Knight was pulling himself up, Will shot an approaching one, his wooden spear aimed at him, covering for his friend and leaving him time to resume his fighting stance.

Will wasn't really thinking about anything he was doing, instinct being the driving force behind every action since riding downhill. His body knew how to move, how to nock and

release, how to follow the horse's pace and adjust every shot to hit its intended target with no fail, without him consciously regarding every movement.

Bors' shouts toward the woods called his attention, but soon Will realized he was riding his euphoria as his "Rus!" drew every noise out with its loudness, huge fists banging on his own chest as they never loosened the grip on his knuckled daggers. The Knights, all still up, stood high above the slashed bodies of their enemies, their blood dyeing the earth. Arthur, as his benevolent nature, released from the deadly touch if his sword the last Woad still standing, now kneeling before him, sparing his life as he stared at the woods, knowing they had been watched all along. They had won.

Will, the only one still on horse, decided to go fetch the others' steeds. As he turned towards the hill they came from, a lifeless body a few feet ahead caught his attention for its blueish skin was covered in painted patterns: Will found himself wondering about their meaning. As he rode past it, he was joined in the task by Tristan, who was already back on his ride.

"Didn't expect them to venture south of the Wall" Will said.

"They provided some distraction, though."

Will eyed the other man for a second, not really knowing what to make of that sentence, as they rode next to each other. Was that supposed to be a joke?

"I don't really get you" he simply said, causing a grin out of Tristan, whose eyes seemed to speak volumes as he turned to look at him.

"You will" he replied, nudging his horse to ride past him towards the most distant horses.

You will.

Will gasped, inhaling sharply as he opened his eyes abruptly, coughing as he found himself laying horizontal, with an oxygen mask on his face and a concerned Beverly at his side.

Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

Life happened, this fic got lost in the process. But hey, here's another chapter! Hopefully more to come!

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.
As usual, reviews and critiques (I've just now realized the typooooo omg) are much much much appreciated :)

Enjoy :D

“You do know the coroner’s job is exactly the opposite of this, right?”

Will snorted a that remark. He pulled himself up, his hands coming up to remove the oxygen mask and having some difficulties as his fingers were numb from the cold, despite the blanket he found covering him.

“Want to tell me what happened? You’re being weird today” said Beverly, a little crease between her eyebrows betraying her worry in her otherwise stoic expression.

“Just today?”

“Well, weirder. You’re so much in your own world that you don’t hear the phone - don’t give me that, we both know you always leave the vibration on - then it takes you an awful lot of time to do your connection thing and then you panic and pass out? Care to share with the class what’s up with you today?”

Will had no answers. He scrubbed his eyes tiredly, sighing. Another one of those dreams.

“You’re awake.”

Both Will and Beverly looked up at the man standing at the entrance of the ambulance, his presence a weight in the crisp air of the small space.

“I’m ok.”

“Mh.” Crawford glanced briefly at Beverly before settling on Will again. She took the cue and stood up, leaving the two men to themselves.

“What happened there?”

“Nothing, I was just overwhelmed.” Will lifted his gaze, meeting his stern stare. “It’s him, Jack.”

The Guru stayed quiet as he listened intently to the gruesome explanation of the gory exhibition.

“A shot through the heart, you say. And what was the bullet?”

“Something that affected him, which he wasn’t expecting, but something he’s rejoicing.” He took a deep breath, the oxygen mask barely weighting in his hands. “There is almost pride there. This is a celebration.”

Jack looked at him, the words visibly settling in. “What could he possibly be celebrating?”

A chill that had nothing to do with the cold ran through Will’s spine.

“Hello Will.”

“Hello Doctor Lecter.”

Hannibal moved to the side as he kept the door open for Will to enter the study, his eyes following as the man pulled his scarf off and placed it on the sofa, along with his coat.

“Agent Crawford told me you haven’t been well today” said the doctor, closing the door and providing intimacy to the conversation.

Will scoffed. “Nobody likes a tattler.”

“He thought it would be wise to let me know in advance, given our appointment for tonight.”

“Oh, then it’s alright!” he replied, the sarcasm not slipping unnoticed.

Hannibal weighted the meaning of his words as he took a seat in his armchair, his eyes never leaving the hunched figure of the disheveled man now looking at the darkness outside of the window.

“Is it Agent Crawford you’re angry with? Or is he simply providing a comfortable target for your emotions?”

Will stilled for a second. The truth was that the uneasiness he’s been feeling since he had the first dream – vision?- had been running and growing under his skin like a current of static energy, prickling at his senses and not enabling him to be lucid in both his thoughts and work. The blackouts and panic attacks had just been the rotten cherries on top of an already messy cake.

He exhaled a breath he didn't realize he was holding and, after a second, slowly went to take a seat in the armchair, facing the doctor.

"I…I had an episode."

Hannibal nodded minutely, acknowledging this confession, his expression not revealing that he'd already guessed as much ever since Jack told him of the events of the morning.

"There was a battlefield. Savages whose skin was tinted with blue patterns, called Woads. A roman carriage with a Bishop. All the Knights, even Dagonet, whose death I have witnessed and already told you about, were there. I was there, and-" Will stopped abruptly, quickly glancing in Hannibal's direction before going back to his clasped hands.

A spark of curiosity glinted in the doctor's eyes.

"Please, continue." His voice gave nothing away, the tone calculated.

"You'll think I'm crazy" Will said in a whisper, barely containing a self-deprecating laugh.

"We've already established that you're not. Your episodes, as you call them, reveal pieces of a time supported by facts and historical proof."

"Still."

Will leaned forward, elbows resting on the knees, his hands coming up to shield his face from Hannibal's gaze. A terse silence settled between them.

Hannibal leaned forward too, eager for those chapped lips to spill the words he longed to hear.

"I can assure you, Will, that nothing you say will be met by derision or judgement." Just a bit more.

"I know that."

"Then what's keeping you from speaking your mind?"

He sighed. "I'm afraid that if I say it out loud, I'll be acknowledging the possibility that all of this is somewhat real, that it isn't only a birth of my messed-up mind, that there is a truth to it all."

He let his hands fall, his eyes slowly coming up to meet Hannibal's. They studied each other for a second that seemed to last a lifetime before Will looked away.

"I'm sorry, but I'm still a bit overwhelmed because of what happened today. It would be best if I went home to sleep it over."

The moment had passed.

Hannibal swallowed the pang of displeasure at seeing Will retreat again into his shell. With the hint of a smile grazing the corner of his lips, he leaned back into the armchair.

“I understand, you must be exhausted both physically and mentally. As a doctor, given today’s emotions, I would certainly recommend a good night’s sleep. But as a friend I’d rather recommend sharing the burden that’s weighting on your mind before you try to rest. That said, I certainly won’t pressure you into something you aren’t comfortable with.”

Will looked apologetic. “I’m sorry about that.”

“You don’t need to feel sorry, Will. I will be here any time you wish to talk.”

“Thank you, Doctor Lecter.”

The reassuring shadow of Hannibal’s silhouette against the lit windows bid him goodbye as Will walked towards his rental. He hurried up climbing inside and closing the door, the dark sky and chilly air a promise of upcoming snow that he really didn’t want to see while on the road. The engine coughed a bit before coming to life, and the steering wheel felt like ice underneath his warm palms as he pulled the car out and onto the road towards his home.

As the doctor’s house disappeared in his review mirror, Will let out a long shuddering exhale, his teeth chattering a little.

He felt a bit sorry for cutting the appointment short, wasting the doctor’s time, knowing very well what a busy man he was. But what was he supposed to do? Tell Hannibal what had been on the tip of his tongue since the man opened the door and greeted him? Tell him that in the short time of this appointment almost every time Will looked at him, the unmistakable image of Tristan overlapped his like static on a tv screen? That whenever that happened, he could feel the weight of his gaze full of unspoken words? The left-over feeling of his scratching beard against his lips and cheeks? The dull pain and longing like a weight dropping in his heart?

Will shook his head, trying to clear his mind with scarce success, his quickened heartbeat deafening him.

Let’s be real, what were the odds that Hannibal too, in a past life, had been a Knight of King Arthur’s? That they’ve fought along in a mystical time and came to find each other centuries later?

“That’s impossible. Definitely impossible.”

….But what *if?*

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

Wassup! Every now and then inspiration comes back, so here's another chapter!
It's a bit of a bridge, sorry about that, I got the whole thing planned in my head...just need to write it down :)

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.
As usual, reviews and critiques are much much much appreciated :)

Enjoy :D

“Will, I need you here. We have another case. Looks like our friend has kept himself busy.”

Will scrubbed his eyes tiredly with the hand that wasn’t currently clutching the phone to his ear while Jack was telling him the location, and barely opened them to look at his alarm clock: 6.15 in the morning. What a way to start a Sunday.

“Yeah, ok. I’ll be there in 20” he said, his voice still groggy from sleep. As the familiar click from the disconnected call reached his ears, Will let the phone fall on the bed beside his head, his hands moving to scrub away the drowsiness from his eyes and face. He had purposefully stayed up almost all night, reading the book Hannibal had previously lent him. He had hoped that the exhaustion would finally let him fall in a restful sleep, one without dreams… or memories. This method gave the wished results, but that meant that he had barely slept. He sure didn’t expect to be called for duty so early.

Fighting his own heavy eyelids to keep them open, Will rose in a sitting position, throwing the legs on the side of the bed. He spared a glance towards the living room where his dogs were still sleeping soundly, having them stayed awake with him for most of the night, and stood up, getting ready and grabbing a few sips of coffee before refilling the bowls and stepping out of the house in the chilly morning air, barely a lick of light noticeable over the otherwise dark horizon.

As soon as to the crime scene came into view, he noticed from the distance that there were more people than usual. Frowning, Will put the car in park next to Beverly’s, and got off. The frozen ground crunched under his boots as he slowly made his way over, spotting Jack almost immediately in the dim light of the morning.

“Hey, Jack.”

Jack barely turned to him, and motioned him over.

“This is new” Will commented as he stepped next to him, and realized what all the commotion was about: they were standing close to a lake, on the rocky shore. The overabundance of people he had noticed were from the scuba team, all almost already geared up.

“Is it in the lake?”

“Hmm” Jack hummed, nodding.

“A guy was fishing on the frozen lake, almost had a heart attack when he pulled up some hair on his hook.” Beverly pulled a disgusted face as she joined them, giving a slight nod in greeting. “Think you can pull your magic thing looking through the ice?”

At that question Will turned to Jack, eyebrows raised.

“You haven't pulled him out yet?”

“I'd rather have you gather your impression exactly as the killer left him to be found. If you need us to break more ice to get a clearer view, we'll to do that. But I didn't want to risk tampering with the scene.”

Will nodded, turning back to look over the vast expanse of ice. It made sense.

“Stay where the ice is thicker!” he heard Beverly say to him as he advanced on the shore, a joking tone in her voice. Will smirked to himself, then stepped on the ice. The sound of it gave him the chills.

“I was kidding, it's safe!” came from further behind him, a moment later.

Will hadn't noticed he had stopped. The feeling of the frozen water under his foot, the sound of his step on its surface had resounded in him, stirring buried memories. He closed his eyes and shook his head, pushing them away, and moved forward.

Carefully making his way on the thick layer of ice, Will reached the round hole, the one the fisherman has made. He crouched next to it, then laid down on his stomac, and peeked in it, hands cupping on the side of his face to shield his vision from the morning light. In that position, it took him some time to actually see and realize what he was seeing.

A light form stood in contrast to the darkness of the depth of the lake. The ghostly pale face was looking up at him from deep beneath the water and ice, the hollow sockets of the now missing eyes holding something shiny that Will couldn't make out from where he was, the mouth hanging slightly open. Partly naked, the bloated body exhibited dark patterns on its skin, and from the chest protruded thin wooden branches. The corpse’s gut was cut open in what resembled a grisly smile, the intestines tied to its ankles along with what looked like strips of something hairy, maybe fur, and were attached to some sort of weight, keeping the body floating at half-depth. A light halo of long blond hair swayed hauntingly around the head, looking like a crown.

Will closed his eyes and took in a slow breath, in and out, in and out, until the pendulum stilled. As he opened them again, he came face to face with its pale face, now impossibly close, just a hair away from breaking the surface of the water. He was staring right into its empty eye sockets, its open mouth forming an “O” in a silent scream, a macabre portrait of what once was a man.

“I see you” Will whispered.

The body started sinking slowly, the sight of the pale face becoming more and more blurred as it sank deeper and deeper, its arms coming up towards the hole, hands stretched towards him as if they were trying to reach him. Will could almost hear the whistling echo of the makeshift arrows as they quickly flew over his shoulders and into the hole, striking the body in the chest, jolting it. After a moment, the corpse resumed its slow plunging, pulled by its ankles, the paper-thin skin tearing into those dark patterns. After a long descent, it finally settled in the depth of the lake, resuming the stance and placing he was found in.

“This is *not* my design.”

As Will blinked, the connection severed, like a power plug being pulled from its socket. He slowly stood up and took a step back, pulling in a trembling breath, hands frozen, a chill shaking him from his core. There was something in this work that called him, that felt eerily familiar, but still far from what the Chesapeake Ripper could do. This horrid display looked, at most, like a bad copy, like a cheated-off essay.

He clenched and unclenched his hands a couple times, before turning and walking back to the shore, approaching the dark man waiting for him.

“It's not him, Jack.”

Being objected to his firm gaze, Will held it, while a tired “Oh, *great*” was said next to them, Beverly turning to walk away.

“Are you sure?” the Guru asked after a beat.

“Yes. It may be inspired by the Ripper, but it's not him.”

“A copycat, then?” the man suggested, his expression betraying exactly what where his feelings on the matter.

No, that didn't feel right. “No, it's more like a braid-pulling show. It’s not like the Ripper’s work, but the patterns on the body recall the ones on the “bow”. He wants to get his attention.”

“Jesus Christ” Jack said, a hand coming to cover his mouth. “Another psychopath courting the Ripper, just what we needed.”

After a few moments of shared contemplative silence, the Guru moved away, dispensing orders and calling for the scuba team to go and retrieve the body.

“A macabre courtship indeed” Will muttered to himself.

He observed the technicians approach the lake with saws and axes. Predicting what they were about to do, he turned and moved to go back to his car. After a few steps, the unmistakable sound of axes hitting the ice reached him, the distant echo of a screamed name filling his ears, making his heart skip a beat.

Will couldn't move. He turned abruptly, eyes wide and mouth agape, realizing what felt so familiar about it all.

A frozen lake.

Arrow-like branches stuck in the chest.

Long hair floating in the water, under the ice, belonging to a dead man.

"It can't be.."

Fuzzy memories of enemies falling from the pieces of broken ice into the freezing water, screams and whistles of arrows filling the air, long hair and furs stained by blood. The blue lips and empty eyes of what was once a friend, the thin strings of wood stuck in his chest. It couldn't be a coincidence.

His legs gave out, and Will fell on his knees, trembling.

Suddenly, it all felt too real.

Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

Guess who's back, back again
Epizit's back, tell a friend
Guess who's back, guess who's back?
Guess who's back, guess who's back?
Guess who's back, guess who's back?
Guess who's back?
Danana na na na na na....

Disclaimer: I don't own anything and blablabla.
As usual, reviews and critiques are much much much appreciated :)

Enjoy :D

“I might not be the only one who connects to the King Arthur’s events I’ve been dreaming about.”

Hannibal looked at Will Graham for a moment, standing outside of his open door, as the man looked at him with haunted eyes, a line of worry creasing between his eyebrows. This was an unexpected visit.

“Good Evening, Will. Please, come in” he said, and made space for him to enter while holding the door open.

Will stepped into the foyer, shrugging off his coat. He had been busy with the case all day, and as soon as he was free to go he had driven to his psychiatrist’s – and friend’s – house. He really needed some clarity in the jumble of his thoughts.

Hannibal took his coat and scarf, hanging them for him, and motioned for him to follow into the kitchen, where the doctor resumed the meal prepping from where he got interrupted.

“There might be someone who has the same recollections of events I’m having” Will said again.

“Galahad’s?”

“No, not necessarily. But for sure someone who was present in that time, someone I-*he* maybe encountered” he explained, hands impossible to keep still, torturing his fingers.

“How have you come to form this hypothesis?” the doctor asked, seemingly nonplussed. A morbid curiosity was devouring him underneath the well-constructed façade.

Will sighed, not knowing where to start, rubbing his forehead. The Admirer might have been someone in that past life, at the time of King Arthur and the Knights, and that would explain the references to the battle of the frozen lake in the mountains, the one where the life of a friend had been lost. The patterns carved on the skin though… those didn't refer to anything from that specific event, but where very close to those on the Human Bow left by the Chesapeake Ripper. Still, those patterns reminded him of the Woads, the blue tint and the war paint on their skin, as they ambushed them and the Roman army. Following this logic, that would mean that the Ripper had some kind of reminiscence of those ancient people, and that would imply he was there too in a past life. Two killers, both the reincarnations of people who possibly lived at that time, centuries ago? On another note, given his past dreams and recollections and reality-swaying episodes, was Hannibal too some reincarnation of his friend and companion Tristan? Could there really be the chance that four people that crossed paths centuries ago would be born again and come to pass each other one way or another in this life, in this time, in this part of the world? This was becoming too complicated and over-crowded to sound plausible.

"This morning, a body was found in a frozen lake. Ankles tied to a weight on the bottom, keeping him floating at mid-depth. Gutted, with thin branches stuck in the chest, four or five of them, resembling arrows. Long blond hair." Will took a breath, and locked eyes with the other man. "It looked eerily like my reminiscence of the Saxons they battled on the frozen lake."

Hannibal kept his gaze steady and mildly interested, his hands slowing down on the motion of seasoning the vegetables in their exquisite arrangement, revealing his full attention.

"That's an…interesting development."

"Barely" Will scoffed, looking at his feet. "I'd rather not share *a reincarnation* with a killer."

Silence followed that sentence. The doctor weighted those words, not taking them to heart as he knew the circumstances that connected them where not the same as those of this vulgar butcher. Still, the thought there might be someone else that shared their memories, someone with his same *inclinations*, even if not as refined, sparked his curiosity. What were the chances?

"…or even worse, with two" Will muttered under his breath after a moment, but the sentence did not go unnoticed in the silence of the kitchen.

"Two?"

Will looked up from the pavement, and met his gaze.

"I mean, I'm not sure about that. We're calling this guy 'the Admirer', because the use of branches in the chest and the skin patterns are entirely similar to the work of the Chesapeake Ripper, per his last display." He paused for a second. "Those skin patterns, they remind me of the war-painting of the Woads."

Hannibal hummed his acknowledgement as he slipped the tray of vegetables in the oven, weighting his options: four people reincarnated (but actually three) all in close proximity…it

was definitely too much of a stretch, and was making the whole situation too unlikely for Will to believe.

“You’re suspecting the Ripper too, of being a reincarnation? Were there any other elements in his previous works that made you question it?” he then asked politely.

Will mulled the question for a moment, recalling all the cases of the Ripper he had worked on. For the life of him, he couldn’t remember anything like it.

“Now that you mention it, no. Only the blood patterns on the skin of the Human Bow looked similar to the Woads’ ones.” Will looked at him, eyebrows set in a contemplative expression. “Are you suggesting that the Ripper might not be connected to my memories? That the skin patterns could be similar…by chance?”

“From what you told me, all of the Ripper’s displays were in some way…artistic. He may have come across some relic, or study, that inspired his imagination.”

“Or” he suggested after a bit of mulling, voice barely audible, “as I only started recollecting these events recently, he might be too.”

“A shared awakening” Hannibal said softly, like even voicing the idea could make it shatter.

Will looked at him, not too pleased with the implication of what was suggested. They shared a minute of silence, the only sound in the kitchen the clutter of the kitchen utensils the doctor was using to prepare another intricate dish.

“It’s all so fragmented, still. Like I’m discovering pieces of a puzzle that I can’t make sense of, and can’t cast together. It’s distracting, and frustrating. I can’t concentrate half the time, I keep hearing echoes and seeing shadows of dreams that belong to a distant past but that overlap with reality so much they’re almost tangible” Will confessed, sighing loudly.

“It appears that those buried memories were awaiting for your stability to waver, to be able to push through the fractures.” Hannibal’s soothing voice kept him calm, despite the contents of what he was voicing. “Consider what would happen to a dam, if a tiny crack were to appear: would it still be able to keep its contents from flowing? If so, for how long before another crack, and another, and another appear, till the weight and force of what was once confined destroy it entirely?”

“Are you saying that my broken mind, my- my instability is what let loose all of this? And that I’m on a path of self-destruction?” Will couldn’t believe the implications of it.

“I’m suggesting that denial and repression don’t seem to be working well in your case, Will. May I suggest a different approach?”

“Like what? Acceptance?” he replied, almost mockingly.

“We have already seen that the gears of your mind work too cynically for their own good, to simply accept the concrete existence of another life of yours resurfacing. So no, Will.” Hannibal’s eyes crinkled at the corners as he looked up from the spices and plates.

“…okay, I’ll bite. What kind of approach?” Will asked impatiently, after a beat. The doctor’s closed-lipped smile grew larger.

“Hypnosis.”

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